That They All May Be One

Amos R. Wells

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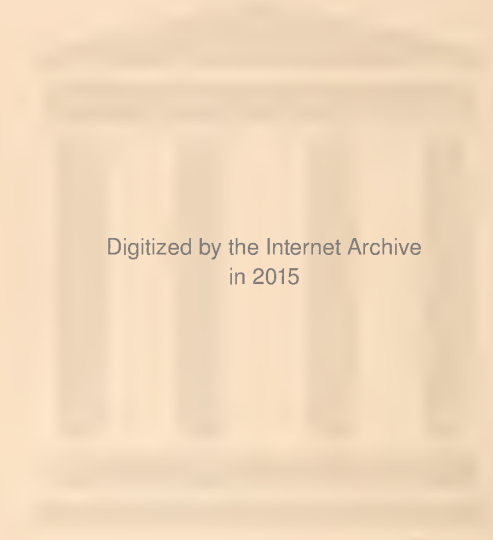

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That They All May Be One

By
AMOS R. WELLS

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A Prayer

SENT OUT OVER JAPAN IN 1900 BY THE CONFERENCE OF MISSIONARIES OF ALL DENOMINATIONS HELD AT TOKYO

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased an universal Church by the precious blood of Thy Son, we thank Thee that Thou hast called us into the same, and made us members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Look now, we beseech Thee, upon Thy Church, and take from it division and strife and whatsoever hinders Godly union and concord. Fill us with Thy love, and guide us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may attain to that oneness for which Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, prayed on the night of His betrayal, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

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That They All May Be One

I

It Is Christ's Longing

IN that Upper Room, most sacred presence-chamber of all the ages, just before He passed to His suffering and death, our blessed Redeemer lifted up His eyes to heaven and prayed. For Himself He prayed, for the glorious completion of the work He came to do; but chiefly for His disciples He prayed, those in that room and their successors throughout time, that they might be kept from all evil, and have His joy fulfilled in themselves.

There is one petition in this great prayer, and one alone, that is repeated over and over. Clearly foreseeing what has sadly come to pass, with a great longing that it should not come to pass, our Savior prayed that His followers might be kept from schism, and that His Church might be maintained in perfect unity:

"Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send me. And the glory which Thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst me."

Because I believe with all my heart that my Savior prayed that prayer, because I believe that His followers are yet very far from fulfilling it, and because I know that this must be a sore grief to my Lord, I have set out this day to write this book. May the Holy Spirit of Christ direct my words, and make them effectual to the accomplishment of His desire.

We are Christ's friends, if we do the things He commands us; if we do them not, we are His enemies.

If we love Him, we shall keep His commandments; if we do not keep them, we shall hate Him.

If we love Christ, and keep His Word, the Father will love us, and will come to us, and make His abode with us; but if we do not keep His Word, our house will be empty of God.

If any one loves Christ, the least expression of Christ's desire is a command; if it is a repeated expression, if it is evidently Christ's great longing, how imperative the mandate to every loving heart!

A Christian is known by his sensitiveness to the wish of his Lord, even as friends are made manifest by their delicate responsiveness to each other's will. That it must first be proved, vitiates it; that our judgment must test it, condemns it; that our inclination must be brought into accord, ruins it; love is spontaneous, inevitable. Certainly as in a mirror face answers to face, so promptly and surely will our Savior's least desire be reflected in the desire of His disciples.

Christ longs for His disciples that they all may be one. Can any one honestly say that that longing is accomplished? that the measure of inward unity enjoyed by Christians is such as to satisfy Christ? that it even approaches the unity of Christ and the Father? that the pitiful disunion outwardly is pleasing to our Lord? that it is not, rather, a constant, heavy sorrow to Him?

Where, then, is our love for Christ? Where is our friendship for Him? Where is our obedience?

A Christian is known by his desire to do completely the will of Christ. He does not wish to set off obedience here against disobedience there. Tho in ten thousand ways he does Christ's will, he is dismayed if in a single point, however slight, His will is disregarded. How if in a point that Christ regards preeminent? Shall our Bible-study and teaching, our open churches, our missions, our charities, our prayers, shall the myriad Christly deeds of the Church content us, while Christ is longing for His disciples to be one as He is one with God, and that longing is unsatisfied?

Where, then, is our love for Christ? Where is our friendship for Him? Where is our obedience?

"We do not see the way into this unity."

But there *is* a way into all Christ's will. He is the Way. As we walk in Him, the way opens out. Thoughts of method have no place in the presence of Christ's desire. There is no room there except for obedience. When Christians in their hearts are filled with a longing to obey Christ's command that they all may be one, the method will have been discovered; they *will* be one.

"It is an ideal, to be admired, to be anticipated languidly, perhaps even to be striven after by zealots, but we must take men as we find them."

Alas! alas! *Christ* had to take men as He found them; but He so found them that henceforth they need no longer take themselves at the low valuation of their inertia, their incompetence, their clogging sins, but at the reality of the new life born in them—His fresh, clear life, to which all that is Divine is immediately possible. We are false to Christ's teachings if we make a far-off ideal of any of His desires for us. Now is ever the accepted time for the Divine will. If we will not hear His voice to-day, it is because our hearts are hard.

As Christ, at this hour, is one with the Father, and needs no waiting nor ever has needed waiting for that unity, so at this hour all Christians might be one with one another and with Him.

We have been talking too long about the way to do it, those of us that are eager to have it done. There needs no method where there is yearning. Determination always organizes itself. When Christians once understand Christ's wish that they be one as He is one with God; when they perceive that every wish of Christ's is possible and immediately possible; when they

come to fear their Lord enough to recognize the peril, the loss, of any disobedience to His desire; when they come to love their Lord enough to make His hunger theirs and to have their chief delight in His blessed will—on that happy day the result will be reached, and they all will be one.

I do not care—need any one care?—how it is brought about, whether by the absolute revolution of our church life, or by the slow transformation of it, or by its retention in form precisely as it is. If we are animated by this spirit of love to Christ and surrender to His will, it will be brought about in the way that is best for the Church and the world. We have only to look to our spirits, and look to Christ for the way.

In mountain-climbing, one stumbles and goes astray by fixing one's eyes on the trail. Keep a clear head, and look at the guide!

And so this book shall have one purpose, to create desire: a shame that for these centuries we have been heedless of Christ's longing; a swiftly rising, uncontrollable appetite for His will; a realization of the blessedness of it that shall make us as eager as He is that we all may be one, even as He and the Father are one.

What is this ideal? How is Christ one with the Father? How are Christ's people to be one?

Christ and the Father are separate personalities. Christian unity is not uniformity. It is no erasure of character into blank levelness. Such a union would destroy communion. Where is there a greater or more interesting variety than in nature? And where is there a more perfect union? Were Christians to be one as Christ is one with the Father, they would not lose their individuality, churches and denominations would not lose their individuality, any more than Christ lost His by union with the Father.

But "I and the Father are one." We must become able to say with full conviction, "Baptist and Presbyterian are one; Methodist and Lutheran are one; Congregationalist and Episcopalian are one."

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We must become able to say, "Have you seen a Baptist? Then you have seen a Lutheran. Have you seen a Methodist? Then you have seen a Presbyterian."

"All things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine." Methodist must come to say to Baptist, "These churches, these funds, these missions,

this equipment, these plans, are yours; all we have is yours, O brothers, and we know that all you have is ours."

"The Father abiding in me doeth His works." "I can of myself do nothing." "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." We must come into such a love for one another, such an understanding of one another and proud delight in one another, that Presbyterian shall rejoice to say, "The Moravians inspired me to do this"; and Methodist shall exult in confessing, "Without the Baptists I can do nothing"; and Disciple shall be proud to claim. "I do always the things that are pleasing to the Lutherans."

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father that glorifieth me." Episcopalian must come to say with gladness, "My honor is from the Wesleyans"; and Wesleyan must come to say, "It is the Friends that glorify me."

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work." Presbyterian must come to say, "It is my meat to do the will of the Baptists, and to finish their work."

Christ was separate from the Father only the better to do a certain task. That done, he returned at once with joy to the Father's bosom. So Methodist

and Baptist and Presbyterian and the rest will act independently only where the necessities of the work require, but will hasten back with rejoicing to the bosom of the one Church.

Thus are Christ and the Father one. Are the denominations thus one? No one will pretend it. But they should be, and will be, for it is the will of Christ.

In that union with the Father our Savior found His supreme, His only, joy. He came to earth that that joy might be in us. In that union with the Father our Savior found His glory, glory which He enjoyed before the world was. He came into the world that that glory might be ours. It is His longing for us; shall it not become our longing for ourselves?

Oh, the wisdom of the will of Christ! Oh, the satisfaction of it, the power of it! And oh, the infinite peril of rejecting it!

For it is like the air, which wraps itself around us lovingly, the minister to all our work and pleasure, never impeding, never obtrusive, easily thrust aside, and we walk oblivious to it; but if for a moment we reject it, in that moment we die.

There is much in Christ's will that we do not yet understand; the peril is in disregarding what we do understand. There is much of Christ's will that we have understood but have disregarded; but we shall never get it done at all if we allow failures at other points to excuse us from obedience at any point.

No; there is this passionate desire of our Redeemer. Alas, alas, that we have neglected it so coldly and so long! Let us arise, let us run in the way of His wish, and let us never rest till we have fulfilled His prayer and His commandment,

That they all may be one.

II

Organic Union

"LET us have fellowship among the denominations," some say, "but not federation." "Let us have federation," say others, "but not organic union."

There can be neither fellowship nor federation without organization. Both fellowship and federation, so far as they are vital and not mere dead names, are organic.

It is the organic union of all Christians that is urged in the New Testament, and it is no other kind of union—if, indeed, any other kind were possible.

For, said Paul, in his immortal analogy, *as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore*

not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye can not say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.

At this point some may wish to object: "Paul was not talking of denominations, but of individual Christians in local churches."

With happy reason he was not talking of denominations: that folly had not yet arisen. We know with what indignant vigor he checked the beginnings of it in that same Corinth: "*I am of Paul,* you Corinthians are saying: *I of Apollos; I of Cephas.* Is CHRIST DIVIDED?"

Were our hundred denominations * existing in his day, can we not imagine Paul's dismay? "*Hath Christ one hundred bodies?*"

No; Paul's ideal of the Church is that it is one body of the Living Lord, one organism, with varied parts.

Paul's analogy is as strong a recognition of the need of differences among Christians as it is a plea for vital union. Organic union implies organs. All life is organic, has organs as its instruments. The higher the life, the more numerous and complex are the organs. Paul's ideal is not a formless *amœba,* a bit of protoplasmic jelly, thrusting forth a portion of itself for an arm, and again the same portion perhaps for a leg, and anon, very likely, the same portion for a stomach, wrapping it around its food. Paul's ideal is the highest organism, with thoroughly dif-

* We have really in the United States more than one hundred and fifty denominations, but many of them are very small. One hundred, however, is far below the sad truth.

ferentiated and permanent organs, not interchangeable, and measurably independent, but fed from the one life-fountain, and linked together by the one mesh of sympathetic nerves.

Organic union, then, is not identity. Some bodies of Christians are full of fire and fervor, but no one wants to make the body all heart. Other denominations are more cautious, deliberate, and thoughtful; but no one wants to make the body all brain. Still other denominations excel in preaching, and others in missions, and others in charities, and others in the reception and adaptation of new ideas; but no one wants a body that is all mouth, or feet, or hands, or ears. The very conception of organic union is an implication of diversity, of organs.

Yet this must be fairly said, that less and less, as denominations grow from their individualistic beginnings, can they justly be characterized by any one attribute. As I write, the Presbyterians, popularly deemed argumentative and scholastic, are engaged more widely and aggressively than other denominations in evangelistic work, and that in tents. The Methodists are supposed to be the people of fiery impulse and unschooled enthusiasm, but theirs is the only Protestant university in the city of Boston, the Modern Athens.

The denominations have sprung from necessities, probably the hundred denominations from a hundred different necessities, which impressed upon them a hundred different individualities; but as time and the work of these same denominations conquer the formative necessities, the denominations inevitably lose their individualities. They come to resemble the trees of a great grove, their trunks distinct, but their branches blended in a sea of green.

Organic union, if it is to be vital, is not to be a congeries of historic organs. In the long organizing thought of God, I am told, my hand has been the matted claw of the pterodactyl, the fin of the fish, the flipper of the trilobite, the jelly of the *amœba;* but were a man to be born now with a fish's fin, he would be a monster. And historic denominations, whose differentiating characteristics are historic memories rather than present-day realities, can never be the organs of a living body of Christ.

Organs, however, Christ's body must have, men and groups of men and vast denominations of men, whose likings and fitnesses point them to one task rather than another, and to one characteristic mode. Let no one speak of organic union as implying a dead level of uniformity. Only, the organs must be actual and not phantasmic, determined

by present powers and not by the memories of the past.

But—and this is the truth to be emphasized—the organs must be united, or there is no organism.

Were Paul speaking now, he might say, "Ye Christians, how have ye dissected the body of Christ! Are the Methodists the heart? To what purpose does the heart beat apart from the body? Are the Presbyterians the brains? To what purpose do the brains think in a heap by themselves? Are the Baptists the missionary feet, the Episcopalians the ministering hands, the Congregationalists the eloquent tongue? But I see the feet in one pile, and the hands elsewhere, and the tongue by itself! *Disjecta membra,* and not the glorious body of Christ! Why, not even His robe was torn apart, nor a bone of Him broken, and would ye dissect Him utterly?"

No; even granting, as Paul would not grant, and as no student of the Churches would grant, that the denominations as they exist to-day are so differentiated and characterized as to be workable members of the body of Christ, what absurdity is their present sundering! Organs must be united or they are no organs. Sever a nerve in your shoulder, and your hand and arm fall limp, a disorganized mass of bone and muscle.

Clog a tiny tube in your neck, and your brain instantly ceases to think. Spread a bit of clotted blood over a corner of your brain, and your heart at once ceases to beat. There are no organs, there is only the form of organs, without vital union.

The ideal of Christian fellowship, of Church federation, that many entertain is a bundle of sticks tied together. The sticks can be broken separately—for they remember the old story—but the bundle can not be broken.

Brothers, when sticks are tied into faggots, it is not that they be broken, but that they be burned! What an ignoble symbol for the Church of the Living God—a bundle of dead sticks!

Rather, the body, the body! One presiding intelligence, directing every part to vigorous deeds. One weaving sympathy, that all may sorrow and rejoice together, and move in harmony. One well-poised strength, all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth. And one Spirit of the Living God at home in every organ, in one no more than another and no less than another, rejoicing in the instrument of His will!

Why should we long for this organic union with one another and with Christ?

Why should we plan for it, and admit no plans contrary to it? Why should we work toward it, slowly though surely, with the patient enthusiasm that never consents to defeat?

Because it would be the climax of our splendid Church history, the consumation of our Christian evolution.

Because it would place the ability of each at the disposal of all and the power of all at the disposal of each.

Because it would combine the utmost flexibility with the utmost strength, absolute freedom with perfect stability.

Because it would inspire every Christian with the momentum of the Church Universal, and overbear all evil with an infinite phalanx of good.

Because it would be the maximum of utilization with the minimum of machinery, the most results with the least waste.

Because it would transform religious drudgery to religious zest, and the aching strain of a dwarf into the easy swing of a giant.

Because it would put the Church of Christ in harmony with the organic union of nature and the organic union of the Triune God.

Because—and we return to our initial thought—because it is the will of Christ, who desires all good for His churches, and nothing but good for them —it is His loving will

That they all
may be
one.

III

The Preservation of Truth

THE advocates of the present denominational disunion are profoundly illogical.

With one breath they say, "These schisms in the body of Christ are necessary in order to preserve in their purity great fundamental principles of faith and belief."

With another breath they say, "There is no schism in the body of Christ, for the denominations are one in the great fundamentals, and differ only in minor matters of doctrine and preferences for modes of administration."

It is unnecessary to combat propositions that are mutually destructive.

And yet, since men may make choice between the two, let it be said that neither argument is a just excuse for the sundering of the members of Christ's one body.

For, in the first place, the denominational divisions do not, as a matter of fact, tend to purity of doctrine. The denominations that are loosely organized are as firm in their adherence to their

principles (or as lax) as the denominations organized most compactly. The denominations that mingle most freely with other bodies, and hold themselves most open to the world—nay, make Church union a fundamental article of faith and desire—are as tenacious of doctrine as the denominations that are most exclusive.

Moreover, within each denomination, whatever its tenets, there spring up inevitably wide diversities of views—Broad Church, Narrow Church, High Church and Low—till often the distance between the wings of a denomination is greater than parts several denominations outside.

Further, the characteristics of the denominations that are most permanent and prominent are not doctrinal but temperamental, matters of fashion and caste, the attitude toward others and the attitude of others toward the denomination. These characteristics are often accidental, and they are often mere popular fancies. "The shouting Methodists," we say, tho in most communities the Methodists are as staid as the Presbyterians; but while not one in a thousand could tell a single doctrine for which Methodism stands, all of the thousand attach to Methodism the idea of enthusiasm. "Cold Presbyterians," we say, tho modern Presbyterians are among the

most enthusiastic of the sects; but the epithet sticks, with the implication of scholarly reserve, in the minds of the great majority who could not name one point of Calvinism. In a similar way the Episcopal Church is held to be fashionable and exclusive, in spite of Western cabin and saddlebag missionaries, in spite of Whipple and Patteson; and those adjectives remain the characteristics of that Church in the minds of most men, who have never heard of the Thirty-nine Articles.

And still further, even if the disunion of the Churches did tend to purity of doctrine in fundamentals, how ungenerous and ill-advised the mode! For it could act only by the expulsion of heretics from the small body of true believers, and thrusting them out to infect other denominations and the world. That this is continually the result of any attempt to band together in isolation a body of correct thinkers, has been attested by the experience of all observers. How often we have seen a denomination solemnly decide that such a man is a corrupter of doctrine, exile him forthwith from the surroundings supposed to be most impregnable against the infection, and push him out into the precise environment where the heresy will most rapidly grow. Thus the very machinery of theological conservatism scatters the seeds of radicalism. The unbrotherly process often

has such a sequel as the driving of European anarchists to America, where they find the more freedom for their plots, and return thence occasionally to assassinate the rulers that forced them into exile.

Truth is never best preserved by isolation. Nothing worth preserving is. When isolation is necessary, it is a token of approaching extinction, as in the case of the slender companies of buffaloes, assiduously guarded as the sole remnants of continental herds. Who thinks that the Indians, if given a State to themselves, would regain their ancient dominion of America? Caged truth is doomed truth. Truth gains virility and empire only through freedom.

The choice doctrines that I love I would not have espoused by a sect, for that espousal at once draws a fence around them. I would have them run among men, and find currency with the flowing air.

Some, to take a crude example, have believed that our Lord intended to establish as an ordinance the literal washing of feet. In glad obedience to what they deem their Savior's will, and in the healthful practise of humility, these believers have formed, all through the centuries here and there, little sects of quaint communicants who have statedly washed one another's feet.

Now if I believed as they do, I would go forth to all men, Methodist and Anglican, Romanist and Congregationalist, Unitarian and Moravian, and preach the duty and privilege of feet-washing. And as I made converts I would say, "Remain where you are, and win to the washing of feet all the Methodists, and all the Church of England."

Conventions of Feet-washers? Yes. A Brotherhood of the Basin? Perhaps. *The Weekly Witness of Washing?* Undoubtedly. All modes of advertising and propagating the belief I held sacred; but not the suicidal restriction of it, not the withdrawal of my followers from their circles of possible influence.

To be sure, in the open tournament I might myself go down; in the clash of minds my followers and myself might become the conquered, might be led to the spirit rather than the letter of Christ's lovely act.

But, even so, and so all the more, I say, truth never needs isolation; for I and my followers would be converted to truth. Half-truth needs the wall. Perverted truth is maintained by fences. If a gardener hits on a monstrosity in the vegetable kingdom he can propagate it only by isolation. But the true type, the basal species, let it run wild!

This distrust of truth, as if it could not care for itself, is paralleled among the sectaries by an equally profound distrust of men and their capacity for truth. With a strange confusion of thought, they expect their ideas to conquer the world, but will not commit them to the world. They hold their truths to be self-evident, but will not allow them to be their own evidence. They talk of regnant truth, but tie their King in a kennel.

How boldly the great discoverers have flung out their discoveries among the multitude, that all might grasp them who would! Was a sect of the Galileans founded to preserve and propagate the fundamental truth of astronomy? Was a Society of Newtonians established to vindicate the law of gravitation? Did the Franklinites withdraw into the wilderness to preach the doctrine of electricity?

And who among all these confident heroes of truth has trusted the people as He trusted them who is the Truth? No doctrines so important as His, so revolutionary, so fiercely fought, so needing, as weak men would think, the defense of isolation. But the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, and not where Christ ever trod. Christ was a Jew, and His disciples were and remained Jews, and the synagogs were

His churches, and the Temple was His Father's house, and His doctrine was thrust forth as leaven in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Our Lord came not to destroy but to fulfil. In not a word of His utterances is there a hint that He contemplated the establishment of a Church outside the Jewish. The rock upon which His Church was to be built was Peter's confession of Him as the Jewish Messiah. The New Covenant in His blood was the fulfilment and continuation of the Old Covenant in the blood of the passover lamb. The stone which the builders rejected was to become the head of the corner, but in the ancient temple and not in a new one. Salvation was of the Jews, and He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And then, when the foes of the new truth proved to be they of its own household; when the apostles, repeatedly rejected by the Jews, turned to the Gentiles, they were only grafting in new branches, they were not making a schism in the one Church. Still the true Christian is a faithful Jew, and we are veritable children of Abraham.

Those that trust truth as Christ trusted it will say with him, "Go ye into all the world and preach the truth to every creature," and they will not add, as He

assuredly did not add, "Those that receive the truth ye shall gather by themselves, lest the truth be weakened by dilution or defiled by common contact or worn by attrition or conquered and overwhelmed by its foes."

The greater the truth the more absolute and implicit may be our confidence in it, and the more certain we may be that it needs no artificial hedge to protect it.

Oh, lovers of verity, men of conviction, knights-errant of the Kingdom of Heaven, do not suffer yourselves to become knights-fenestrant! Out into the open, into the fenceless forests and moors, the Red Cross waving in the wind! What you believe, commit to all men to believe, call upon all men to defend! Establish a democracy of truth, not an oligarchy. And be sure that, as you contend in this spirit, by your side will be the one Defender of the Faith, and you and He together will be doing all that God and man can do to preserve the truth in its purity, and win its complete dominion over the hearts of men, so

That they all may be one.

IV

Minor Differences

UT if it may not be said that sectarian disunion is necessary for the preservation and propagation of truth, neither may it be said, as it so often is said, that only minor differences separate the sects while they are one at heart, and that therefore any agitation of Church union is superfluous.

One at heart? Consider two persons that are one at heart, two star-crowned joys of earth and heaven, two lovers.

They live in each other. In work or in play they would be together. From necessary separation they hasten longingly to each other's arms. When they part, each leaves half a soul behind.

They know each other thoroughly, every turn of the wrist, every inflection of the voice, their choice of color and fragrance, favorite spots, book friendships, aversions as well as likings. They are eager to learn each other's past, for it is a prolongation of the loved one. They delve in each other's character as in a bank of jewels,

They rejoice in each other's joy. Each is more proud of the other's achievement than of his own, more exultant in the other's possession or enlargement than in his own.

They sorrow in each other's loss. When one is sick, the other pines away. Failure, disappointment, privation to the one, comes as a poignant grief to the other.

They help in each other's work. What a halo is thrown around a task they perform together! However humble, the shaking of rugs, the cleaning of windows, it becomes a deed of romance.

They have all things in common. A new viand, a delectable poem, a rosy sunset, they hasten to share with each other. The very thought of separate stores is impossible treason.

They have differences? Yes; but the differences only give piquancy to their association. While one prefers Browning, the other prefers Shelley; it is well: so much the wider knowledge for them both. While one is impulsive, the other is cautious; while one is sanguine, the other is less hopeful; while one is artistic, the other is musical; while one is a bookkeeper, the other is a stenographer. It is admirable: each complements the other, and the two together are safe and whole.

And their future is knit as their present. The decades of earth and the infinite aisles of eternity are precious to them because they will tread them together. They want no separate life in all the happy future because they are one at heart.

In the presence of such a picture, realized daily and hourly in every community, to speak of the sects as being one in heart seems profanation.

Methodist and Presbyterian living in each other's lives? Longing to be together in all their services? Separating with reluctance and of necessity (for the preservation and defense of the truth), but at each opportunity flying from their parted conventicles to each other's arms?

Baptist and Episcopalian knowing each other thoroughly? Acquainted with each other's holy men, heroes of the same cross, martyrs of the same Christ? Reading each other's books and journals? Eager to learn each other's past as an extension and interpretation of the beloved present? Eager to understand each other's character, and sympathize with each other's aversions and preferences?

Congregationalist and Methodist rejoicing in each other's joy? Exulting in the progress of each other, each

happy when the other surpasses in statistics?

Presbyterian and Baptist sorrowing in each other's loss? Each speeding to prevent the disaster when the other must close a church or abandon a mission? Each ready and importunate with practical assistance when the statistics of the other fall off?

Lutheran and Episcopalian helping in each other's work? Vastly preferring joint enterprises to separate ones?

Friend and Disciple having all things in common? Hastening to share with each other a fruitful method, a convincing speaker, a surplus of funds?

And all the sects anticipating no future apart from each other? Each willing to decrease that the other may increase? Each finding in sweet companionship with the other a golden joy that irradiates their ambitions and all their hopes?

To ask these questions is to be convicted of irony, so far do the practises and sentiments of the sects fall below those of any pair of lovers.

But is the ideal too high? Perish the thought! Shame that the unity of earthly love should exceed the unity of Christian brothers! Shame that the attainment of individuals outside of Christ

should be conceived impossible for the joint effort, the mutually sustained accomplishment of multitudes of Christian saints!

It is not impossible. Only a little more openness to the Holy Spirit of imperial love, only a little more obedience, only a little more humility, only a little more unselfishness, and Christ's churches will give to the world examples and evidences of high friendship, of romantic love, such as carnal affection has never thought to produce.

It is possible. It is sure. It is coming soon, with a great leap that will amaze the world and fill all hearts with the exultation of it. But it has not come yet.

Talk of Church union superfluous? The denominations one at heart because only minor differences separate them? Why, who does not know that minor differences make the highest barriers?

When lovers quarrel, it is not because one is emotional and the other phlegmatic, but it is because one prefers the parlor while the other wishes to remain on the porch.

The denominations that are closest together in history, doctrines, and practises are often farthest apart in ac-

tual life, dislike each other most keenly, and will require the greatest miracle of love to bring them together.

Indeed, can any difference of belief or procedure that affords an occasion for this great sin of disunion be justly held a minor difference? Those are minor differences which men can condone in one another, smile upon complacently, live with.

However petty in itself, in results, at least, that is no minor difference that can hold asunder two great bodies of Christians, so that they are ignorant of each other, do not help each other, do not rejoice each in the other, but are strangers except where they are rivals and even opponents.

A minor difference, when by a perverted conscience it is exalted into such a sinful barrier, covers itself straightway with a vine of spreading excuses. It is never in the estimation of the sectary himself a minor difference, but only in the minds of other sectaries. Each argues that his own fence is based upon the rock of necessary truth. Tho, as you and I look upon it, a certain sect is built up on the literal interpretation of a few passages evidently designed for a spiritual interpretation only, that sect itself holds those texts in every letter to be the foundation-stones of the New

Jerusalem. Tho, as you and I look upon it, another sect is carrying over into the present a precept intended only for the local circumstances of some little church of Paul's day, that sect itself considers that precept the keystone of the universe. Tho, as you and I look upon it, still another sect, tho doubtless correct in its interpretation of Scripture and its application to the present time, has based its division upon a non-essential, an absolute non-essential, to which its members might adhere as well in any other denomination as in their sect, yet they themselves look upon the practise or the formula or the rite as the central prerequisite of salvation.

Minor differences? Why, what but a minor difference separates the charcoal from the diamond, each pure carbon, and no one knows just why they are not alike? What but a minor difference, a slight change in the inclination of light, separates a lowering sky from a rainbow? What but a minor difference, an accident of gravitative balance, separates a comet from a planet, erratic wanderings from conservative stability?

Here are two mushrooms, alike to the untrained observer; but one will feed you and the other poison you. Here are two sets of eyes, both blue, both bright, both beautiful; but one is sightless and the other sees.

Ah, what infinities of loss, of repulsion, and of change may grow from minor differences! There is no angle, however slight, but, extended, may measure a universe. There is no difference of human opinion, however minute, but, prolonged by passion, self-interest, and time, may thrust the holiest affinities into monstrous divergence.

If indeed these are minor differences that are holding asunder the members of Christ's body, if mere matters of opinion and of preference are preventing the fulfilment of His longing for the unity of His people, then shame upon us, heaven-high and hell-deep!

If the perspective of our desires is so awry, if for minor choices and judgments we are degrading still more to a minor position His choice and His judgment, what can we expect but confusion and discord?

If in this matter we are perverting proportions, how can we guard other matters from the contagion of insanity? If for minor differences we are disobedient to Christ, how shall we withstand the great temptations?

And if indeed these are minor differences that are parting the sects, let us cease to prate about our spiritual union, and look with dismay but clearly upon our real condition. Let us recog-

nize the peril and the difficulty, the more severe because veiled so cunningly, and let us gird ourselves for the heavier task.

It is to enter the vacuous realm of prejudices and predilections. It is to throw down the gauntlet to passions and whims. It is to unmail opinion, to unhorse egotism. It is to dethrone pride and seat humility at the center. It is to place first things first and second things second.

And in it all, O Lord Jesus, it is to exalt Thee, that Thy will may be done on earth as in heaven, that our wills may not be done nor our selfishnesses consummated, that men may enter into the secret of Thy union with Thy Father, a union unmarred by any differences, major or minor, and so

That they all
may be
one.

V

Conscientious Convictions

CONSCIENCE! War-cry of the hero and shibboleth of the petty partisan! The sectary's boast and the martyr's consolation! Refuge of ignorance, conceit, and passion! Vantage-ground of godlike self-sacrifice! Home by turns of deity and demagog—what deeds of splendor and ignominy bear thy name!

Men, as conscience impelled them, have bathed nations in the blood of innocents. Other men, impelled by conscience, have braved the terrors of the battle-field, carrying succor to the wounded.

Men of conscience have revolved the thumbscrew, driven the wedge in the iron boot, and turned the rack to the last point of agony. Other men of conscience have broken down their dungeons, freed their white-haired captives, and ground to powder the instruments of their inquisition.

Men of conscience—*women* of conscience—have tossed their brothers over precipices, bound them to stakes in the midst of the advancing tide,

heaped firebrands against their blackening flesh. Other conscientious men have taught and endured, endured and taught, till martyrs' memorials arose in the scenes of their sufferings.

This inner voice that we call conscience we always assume to be the voice of God. History and observation alike should convince us that it is often the voice of quite other than God.

The long, sad story of idolatry has but one plot—the exaltation of a human passion and dubbing it a god. We worship lust? Never! It is Astarte or Aphrodite. We worship ambition? Perish the thought! We bow before Baal or Zeus. We worship self? Fie! It is Conscience, sacred symbol of immutable Omniscience.

That same sad history of idolatry should hint to us how easily the natural—yes, even the excellent and admirable—becomes monstrous idol-worship, incestuous and devilish. Who does not, gazing at the sun, feel a thrill of awe, and know himself closer to the Almighty? Who would think it possible to degrade that sacred reverence into the child-murdering furnace of a Moloch? Who is not exhilarated in the fecundation of the seasons, as the dry earth brings forth the children of the grass, and bursts into a progeny of loveliness?

And who, from that holy and purifying contemplation, could turn immediately without disgust to the foulness into which it grew, the sodomites of the temple?

If ever the history of conscience is written (intricate and ungracious task!), many such transformations will be recorded. Some of them, alas! will be recorded of the Christian sects.

For an opinion at variance with our brothers', if it is true and vital, may require us to fight for it, and perhaps to die for it. Then we are heroes of conscience. But if, after the battle is won, or the truth ceases to be vital, it serves us as an excuse for continued variance, we are idolaters of conscience and its heroes no longer.

Our courage is transformed into pugnacity, our determination into obstinacy, our self-sacrifice into the spirit of persecution, and our self-forgetfulness into vainglory.

At first we contended for principles; but now, for place and power. At first we were content that truth should prevail; but now we seek self-aggrandizement. At first we desired the reform of others; but now we wish their adhesion to ourselves.

All, or nearly all, of the denominations have had their heroic age. All, or nearly all, sprung from a true necessity of conscience. Where the necessity continues, by all means let the denomination continue, with no fear of degenerating from its heroism. Where the necessity has expired, the sect is in sore peril of idolatry.

I do not mean that the denominations, most of them or any of them, are living on their past. No, no! They are justifying themselves daily, as individuals and Churches, by a myriad daily acts of Christlikeness. But are they justifying themselves as isolations? That cause of precious truth which, a century ago, justified the separation from their brothers, is it a present justification, or has it long since been added to the memories of defeated error?

This is a serious and solemn question, far too long ignored by Churches and Churchmen.

Because a sect is not justified in its schism by its good deeds, its growth in numbers, its splendid edifices, its revivals, its victorious machinery, its expanding missions, its overflowing charities, its colleges and libraries and literature. All these might come, and doubtless in greater abundance still, through union with brother Churches. A sect is

to be upheld in its schism, upheld by God and man, only as it possesses some necessary truth which the other denominations do not possess, and which could not be imparted to them as well by union with them as by isolation from them. If it is clear that the truth is of sufficient value to counterbalance the evils of separation; if it is clear that it would be lost, overwhelmed, or corrupted by union; if it is clear that, tho it might be propagated from the midst of the other sects, it could not be propagated so effectively—then let the denomination continue, with God's blessing upon it.

But these are three unlikely conditions, and the evils of sectarianism are so manifest that the burden of proof rests always with the sectaries.

Any single denomination is but a small minority of Christ's followers. It is incredible that the other denominations do not contain vast numbers of intelligent, devout Christians. It is very improbable that for a century or more any great, necessary truth should remain the exclusive possession of a single sect. If it were so, that would certainly argue the absurd inefficiency of sects as propagators of the truth. If a sect, for any considerable period, has so failed to impress its truth upon other Churches that it has not yet converted to the truth a single denomination, it might well sus-

pect its method, and make trial of union as a vantage-ground for its propaganda.

Nor is it at all likely that, in this day of free thought and free speech, the united advocates of any truth would be overwhelmed in the midst of any denomination. We are continually witnessing, in single denominations and the Church at large, the triumph of ideas, or at least their persistent agitation, to promote which, a century ago, it would have been thought imperatively necessary to form a new denomination.

An instance of this is the introduction of individual communion-cups—an innovation repugnant to many as destroying sacred, time-honored associations, or even violating what they consider an absolute command of Christ, while to others it is reasonable, necessary, and devout. Yet in spite of these positive, wide, and conscientious differences, the change has gone steadily forward, the churches that chose to, have adopted it, and those that voted otherwise have rejected it, and no church has been disrupted, nor, so far as I have heard, has a single communicant been lost to our fellowship. But sects have been formed on grounds of conscience slighter than this.

Scattered through the denominations are thousands of earnest men who conscientiously hold that the prohibition

of the liquor traffic is the duty of the state, and that no political question, nor all political questions put together, may for a moment be considered as surpassing the importance of that measure. For what they think more effective action these men have bound themselves together in a political party, but they have not for a moment thought of forming a new religious denomination, tho the crusade against alcohol is held by all of them to be their first religious duty. Instead, they have powerfully influenced the denominations from within, and have won several of them to their tenets.

Consider those followers of the Prince of Peace who hold war in this age to be barbaric and sinful, and who, in scores of peace societies, are moving so powerfully upon legislatures and parliaments that international arbitration is already recognized as the coming, inevitable mode of settling international disputes. To effect this fundamental Christian end no sect was founded, but men of all sects who believed in the reform associated themselves in a mighty brotherhood. If a sect had been established, as according to precedent it might well have been, the reform would still be in the air.

No duty calls so urgently upon individual Christians and the denominations as this duty of examining the

grounds of the separate existence of each sect. Upon individuals, because if a sin is being committed by sectarianism each church-member is responsible for it who does not protest against it, and, to the limit of his power, abolish it. Upon denominations, because this individual conviction becomes effective against the sin only as it combines to overthrow it, since it is a sin of combination.

Make the examination in all humility. Be more willing to admit that you were wrong than to charge your brother with wrong.

Make it with full knowledge of your brothers. Discover their real attitude, their actual beliefs and practises, and distrust profoundly your prejudices and uninformed opinions.

Make it in consultation with your brothers of other sects. Do not read books about them, but read their faces, the tones of their voices, the clasp of their hands, the accent of their prayers.

Make it in communion with God. Disavow your own judgment; too often has it proved untrustworthy. Open your mind to the inrushing Spirit of Truth. Let Him take of the things of Christ and of Christ's brethren, and show them to you.

And then, having come clearly to understand precisely what truth your denomination holds, and what truth the other denominations hold, then—how strange it seems to say it!—*get as close together as your consciences will allow.*

The higher conscience and not the infinitely lower; the conscience of God and not the instigation of Satan; consciousness of the entire Kingdom and not of a sect; conscience of humility and not of pride.

Recognize degrees of importance in truth, distinguish between misunderstandings that must be explained, and unwillingness that must be persuaded, and rank hostility that must be fought; allow no breach that truth does not require.

This is not to minimize conscience, but to magnify it. This is to lift conscience from the muck-heap and place it on the throne. This is to save conscience from the dwarfing of self-interest, the contamination of passion, the pollution of pride.

This is to build up, out of our paltry shreds of sectarian consciences, a vast, unified conscience of the Church, that shall throb in unison with the conscience of the Most High, and in His name impel a consolidated Christendom to the conquest of His world.

It is—yes, out of our fragmentary sects and segments of minds, it is to form within us the Mind of Christ, which is one and indivisible, the ultimate and only conscience of His people; that Mind whose will is our authority, whose command is our program, and whose longing it is, and, through the sad, waiting centuries ever has been,

That they all may be one.

VI

The Home Feeling

SOME talk of the advantages of sectarianism. It is as one would say "The beauties of dissection," "The charm of cancer," "The glories of consumption."

But since many feel vaguely that vast benefits somehow spring from these divisions in the body of Christ, it is necessary to examine the arguments of the apologists for sectarianism, and show how every apparent advantage is illusory.

"The denominations," claim the sectaries, "have great zeal for their own. Their ardor is not dissipated over too wide a field. Community ownership has never worked well. Men will not throw their heart into their work unless each has his own home to beautify, his own little farm to till. Man needs his own if he would be as zealous for religion as for secularities."

True; but is the feeling of ownership confined to small possessions? The child owns his tiny flower-bed, and has no conception of it if he possesses a farm; but when he becomes a man, every rod of his smiling acres is a personal joy to

him. To a provincial his country neighborhood alone gives the zest of ownership, and he cares more for the improvement of the county roads than for a new transcontinental railroad; but as he reads the papers and books and meets men of affairs, tho he never leaves his township, he comes to have a sense of ownership in the great country, and a zeal for the welfare of Colorado quite as real as for Hardscrabble.

Switzerland is a small country and the United States is vast; but does the Swiss excel the American in patriotism, or experience in greater degree that zeal for his nation that springs from a sense of ownership?

The Methodist Protestants are a small body and the Methodist Episcopalians are very numerous. It is notorious that the individual zeal of the members of our largest American denomination is unsurpassed, and their personal pride in their Church.

"Our own!" Why, were a denominational union to be formed as large—were that possible!—as the United States, could not each denomination continue its zeal for its segment of it, as the Buckeye is proud of Ohio? And would not the zeal for the union soon come to surpass even the zeal for the denomination, as each true citizen of Ohio is first an American?

"Our own!" Ownership and the power of ownership are as large as the man. Become a Newton, and you shall feel a sense of ownership beyond Orion.

"Our own!" Why, even if, some day, men's consciences should allow a Church union that would obliterate sects altogether, and our divisions should be only local, "the Church of Christ in Allentown," "the Church of Christ in Chicago," would we not still have the sense of ownership, with its zeal? "The Church of Christ in Chicago" would be as large as most denominations. It would all be within walking distance. Any member of that Church could know it a thousandfold more intimately than a United Presbyterian, for instance, could know the men and affairs of his continental denomination. Would not the sense of ownership in "the Church of Christ in Chicago" come to be to a Chicagoan as precious as his denominational membership to a United Presbyterian?

"Our own!" It has no basis except our activity, of mind or body. An ardent Sunday-school worker, well-read, broad-minded, with a sense of his high calling and with industry to match his zeal, has the feeling of ownership whenever he sees a Sunday-school. He is at home there, however strange may

be the rest of the church life. The entire world of Sunday-schools is his, from Coshocton to Canton. Cutting cleanly across all denominational lines, the Sunday-school is all the sect he has.

Or, here is a specialist in missions. He is supporting a native worker in Foochow, and he lives for China. Amoy, Tientsin, Pao-ting-fu, Sz-chuen, —these are home names to him. Every scrap of information from China is meat and drink. If he has a denomination, it is the Flowery Kingdom.

There is a sectary that Christ can love! His is a denominationalism that is rational. It is positive and not negative, progressive and not reactionary. It is liberal, unselfish. The ardent Sunday-school worker is so much the more interested in the temperance reform. He that supports a Bible-reader in Foochow is all the more rejoiced when the Gospel triumphs in North India.

How our Church divisions, that are based upon the accident of birth into a Presbyterian family or a Moravian; or upon a chance removal into a Baptist neighborhood or a Congregational; or upon the shadowy prolongation of dead issues—how they pale before these stout and sinewy divisions that are born of living tendencies and personal interest! Your fundamental divisions of men, the divisions that ab-

sorb the greater part of their time and strength and love in the secular sphere, are their occupations. Men are masons, artists, cooks, poets. It is even so in the religious sphere, as Paul recognized at the beginning of things—"some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

"Our own"—when the Church is organized as it should be, there will be no lack of a personal, individual interest; and, perhaps, of a denominational interest; only, it will be transferred from non-essentials to essentials, from accidental to innate, from divisive to cumulative and edifying. No longer pride in a partisan name, fealty to a vague something stretching out over three thousand miles, it will be, first, "our own" local work, the Church of Christ in—Kalamazoo; then, it will be "our own" calling, the Guild of Primary Sunday-school Teachers, or the Brotherhood of the Consecrated Stereopticon, or the Association of Workers among Street Boys, or the Friends of Persia, or the Sailors' Christian Federation; finally, it will be "our own" Church of Christ Universal, the towering pride, the dominating ambition, the exultant joy, of all our life.

But we are charged with theorizing in the face of sentiment. "The home feeling of the denominations," men say, "is a very real thing, not to be displaced

by an airy ideal. It is the product of long usage. It is consecrated by generations of dear associations: the pew where our mothers knelt; the baptismal service that received our fathers into the church; the doctrines for which our ancestors fought. Upon it lies the tender halo of time. It is the fragrance of religion, and nothing is so tenacious as fragrance. If you could drive it away, and establish in its place a system however mathematically correct, and springing with whatever symmetry from one unifying center, you would abolish romance and affection, and you would level Christianity with geometry."

To that it must be replied that sentiment is strong, and the sentiment of home is strongest of all; but home need not be a hovel.

The home feeling is a habit, as the sense of ownership is a growth. To Scott the baronial pile of Abbotsford was as real a home as to Burns his cottage. When the Earl of Warwick returns to that splendid castle, he rests in a home as satisfying—no more, no less—as the neat wooden house that receives Captain Barker, just back from the Newfoundland Banks. The Anglican is at home in the eloquent aisles of Westminster quite as comfortably as the New Yorker in the little wooden One-Hundred-and-Eighty-Ninth-Street Tabernacle.

It is noble for a miner to be content in a cabin; it is ignoble for the mine-owner to continue in the cabin. "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul!" To the cabin the young wife was brought. Around it were planted the first morning-glories. In it the children were born. From it was carried the first hostage to the infinite Hereafter. The cabin will always be a sacred place to the miner. He will come back, some day, perhaps, and buy it. He may transfer it to some woodland shrine in his spacious estate. But he will not continue to live in it.

For a man is known by his home. The scholar outgrows the village library. Edison outgrew his laboratory in the baggage-car. As the man enlarges his estate enlarges, and if the man stagnates his home is stationary; it can not be otherwise.

In heaven there will be no flats. The abiding-places that Christ went before to prepare for us are mansions; they are not two-room cottages. The cathedral where they worship before the throne of God is spacious enough to contain ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. The organ to which they sing is the music of the spheres.

But it will be all homelike, for the soul will be enlarged, enfranchised. Out of the barest tenement, with seven rooms and a bath, the free spirit will step into

the great hall of its eternal mansion, and know itself for the first time at home. Out of the little wooden prairie church, with its six rattling windows where the bluebottles buzz, the liberated soul will pass to the temple of the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is of gold and its walls one chrysolite, nor will he for an instant be a stranger there.

That is, if the spirit here below has lived for the large things and not for the small, and has striven, even in the crib of space and time, to grow wonted to eternity and to the infinite.

I do not mean that there is nothing small in heaven, enwrapping and cozy. That would be to read curiously wrong this specimen earth, its infinitesimals inscribed on every atom with the delight of God. Nor do I mean that when the Kingdom of Heaven comes on earth in a united and speedily triumphant Church, it will all be stately and wide, with no cozy corners in it.

Cathedrals have their chapels; the grandest cathedrals often have the most chapels. There may be small rooms in the lordliest palace. Great Britain has its Rutlandshire and the United States its Delaware and Rhode Island. College graduates, as they fling themselves out upon the vast world currents, still maintain alumni associations, and re-

turn now and then to renew their memories upon the bosom of *alma mater.*

Even so the Church of Christ, when Christians come to the will of Christ, when it rises crystalline and one, must lose no fragrance of sentiment, no charm of memory, no power of ancient custom. We may even continue to have, for all I know, our one hundred denominations. Ways will be found—how familiar are those ways to the mind of the Creator!—ways will be found to live in the large and in the small, the new and the old, the individual and the comprehensive, as God abides alike in the ant-hill and Arcturus.

And it will be all so easy, as we come to live with Christ! As we abide in Him and He in us, we shall be at home wherever He is, and most where He is most.

Be this our exile, to disregard His will. Be this our home, to love His will and do it. Oh, I think that for the first time the Church will be a home to us when in a passion of love for our Redeemer we set ourselves to realize His prayer,

That they all
may be
one.

VII

Working Together

ANOTHER advantage claimed for sectarianism is that men of the same stamp of mind and the same type of conduct can work most easily together. "How, in a united Christendom," the sectaries ask, "could the 'shouting Methodist' and the High Church Episcopalian understand each other and work effectively together?"

The answer is obvious. If, in a united Church, men of the same stamp can alone work together effectively, let them! They will all be there, Methodists and Anglican and the rest, and any wise management will set to working together, in denominations as now, or otherwise, those that can work together best.

But it is an error to suppose that men are divided into denominations according to their types of mind and preferred modes of action. Sectarianism is not so logical! It would be nearer the truth (tho of course an incomplete statement) to say that men are divided into sects by the accident of birth in certain localities or social strata, or even certain families.

Is there a sect that could be called the denomination of the mystics? Are not those men of the omnipotent ideal found, and quite equally, in all sects? Praise God for that, and count it a happy omen for Church union!

Which is the Denomination of the Dryasdusts? Not a sect but is cursed with men that can not see beyond a fact.

And our liturgical brethren? spirits of the procession, souls that rejoice in symbols and cymbals? Do they not march in all ranks, organizing Sunday-school parades where they can not have recessionals, and, if debarred from altar candles, stringing Chinese lanterns?

The literalists, are they not with us all, everywhere holding to the nouns and letting go the adverbs, everywhere interpreting Scripture by refusing to interpret, and translating by transferring?

These, ah, such as these are Nature's sects, the logical denominations, running across our illogical sects as the strata run across the crevices of a quarry. If it were true that men of the same stamp could alone work together effectively, then indeed must our denominations be reorganized, then indeed must they be dissolved together, that like may settle with like.

But is it true? Or, rather, is it not constantly proved that men of differing and even of opposing types of mind, if they are loving and just, work best together? Your mystic needs your "practical" man (the mystic is supremely practical) to lay the lower courses of his temple. Your Dryasdust needs the mystic, to tie his statistics to the stars. We can not all be drilling choir-boys and managing Sunday-school concerts.

In spiritual electricity as in natural, positive attracts negative. It is complementary colors that combine to pure white. It is not well that man—any kind of man—should be alone. Moreover, it is impossible.

Perhaps, then, the advocates of sects, seeing it imprudent to press their argument, will reverse it, and will ask why Church union is necessary if all the elements for effective work are found in each denomination. The answer may well be a parable.

For our Lord, the Master Architect, has set His workmen to building a vast and glorious cathedral; but we have rejected His plans, and we are about devices of our own.

Here in a corner we are building a little wooden church, with a pointed steeple and green blinds. Over against it we are building a little stone church,

with a Norman tower and stained-glass windows. And next to it we are setting up a movable church of corrugated iron. And its neighbor is a marble church, elaborately carved. And beyond it is an unpainted structure of rough boards, with a bell hung bare upon the roof. And beyond that is a church of red brick. And thus all over the cathedral space we are erecting little churches to our minds, but not to the mind of the Great Architect.

Yet upon each building labors a full complement of workmen—artists to make the drawings, men of figures to cast up the estimates, men of the spade, men of the chisel, men of the trowel, men of the saw.

Some day, somewhere in a dusty corner, Hilkiah will find the plan of the cathedral, and he will take it to Shaphan. And Shaphan will show it to Josiah. And Josiah will rend his clothes and will say: "Great is the Architect's wrath upon us, because our fathers have not obeyed this plan."

Then (and may Huldah be silent!) Josiah will bestir himself, and Shaphan and Hilkiah will aid, and all the people will begin to build the cathedral. They will use the material at hand and the workmen as they are. Sets of designers and carpenters and masons that are wonted to one another may continue to

work together and under their familiar overseers.

But they will be at work upon a cathedral! ah, they will be at work upon a cathedral!

And while one set of workmen takes the apse, another will take the nave; while one adorns the choir, a fourth will raise a tower; here they will perfect a rose window and yonder they will complete a chapel. There will be scope for all talents as before, cooperation of workmen as before, but, as never before, superb harmony of result, and obedience to the will of the Great Architect. Thus through the centuries the cathedral will grow, its flying buttresses spanning all seas, its vaulted roofs overarching all lands, until, like Daniel's stone become a mountain, it shall fill the whole earth.

The argument for Church union is not that it brings together for cooperation men of diverse abilities, but that it takes these sundry cooperations already organized, turns them from heterogeneity to harmony, and builds, instead of a clashing congeries of conventicles, one temple to the one God.

Perhaps this result is granted desirable, but men argue that it is practically unobtainable. "No human mind," say the sectaries, "could wisely direct the vast affairs of a united Church. Why,

as it is, some of the denominations are unwieldy. A united Church, of its own weight, would fall to pieces, and we should have the sects again."

It is the old plea of the Anti-Federalists, which our ancestors boldly overrode (would the sectaries read history) when they formed the United States.

Suppose the hundred sects of this country were joined in a United Church. They would not number, alas! two-thirds of the population of the United States. Could they not be as effectively directed? Are religious affairs so much more complex than secular that a Congress, a Supreme Court, and a President can be devised for the one and not for the other? Are men as citizens of the Kingdom of God so much more unmanageable than the same men as citizens of this earthly republic? Are the statesmen of the Church so inferior to the statesmen of the Nation? Have these sundered States, have Massachusetts and Maryland, have Pennsylvania and Mississippi, have Maine and Oregon, with all their initial jealousies, rivalries, and hostilities, with their inherent differences of soil and occupation leading to inevitable and severe clash of interests, have these States found it possible to unite in a Nation that has proved to be one of the most powerful and efficient ever formed, and shall a similar

union be impossible for churches that worship a common Lord?

How insincere is this contention of the sectaries a single thought makes evident.

For here are one hundred denominations, and each of them, in ambition and effort, and generally in actual fact, extends over the entire country. The leaders of each must be men of continental vision and grasp. They must take enormous journeys, be capable of enormous exertions. The missionary operations of each lay hands upon the most distant regions of the globe.

Here we have one hundred sets of boards — bishops, superintendents, secretaries, assembly committees, what you please—one hundred sets of men, each of whom has unaided responsibility for finances, evangelism, missions, church erection, religious education, discipline, doctrine, charities, that reach from Atlantic to Pacific, and even to the Antipodes. And the opponents of Church union affect to believe that out of all these hundred sets of men it would be impossible to choose a single set of administrators that would be capable of conducting a united Church, whose bounds would be no greater than those of the separate sects!

Study the history of the United States or of the German Empire before the times of Washington and Bismarck. Upon each principality rested the complicated cares of a nation. Each State was vexed with the problems of an empire—Indian wars, questions of boundaries, civil strife, banks, tariffs, coinage, suffrage, tremendous complexities and stupendous waste of time, resources, and energy.

How much easier is it, now that the State legislatures may attend to local affairs undistracted by national difficulties, and Congress may control national affairs unfretted by local perplexities! That national and local politics are still somewhat intertwined is no objection to the argument, since all are agreed that the ideal is their separation, and we are moving constantly and profitably in that direction.

And how much easier will be the effective administration of the churches when each denomination, if it is continued, becomes a State of a United States of Christ, when men whose capacity is ten may be set over the tens, and men whose capacity is one hundred or a thousand may be set over the hundreds and thousands, and men of Napoleonic skill may direct the millions! In that day it will not be necessary to put small men in places painfully too large

for them, as so often happens now in our multiplied national religious organizations. Also in that day the men of splendid organizing and executive power will not turn to secular affairs for a field meet for their genius.

Brothers, I have a vision of organized efficiencies! I see young men of just and high ambition turning eagerly to the Church of God, as now to commerce, war, and politics. I see them finding, within its vast and orderly domain, scope for all their talents, opportunity of the utmost influence. I see them falling into position, as men of different ranks drop into place when the bugle summons an army. With freedom to do their best and largest, with praise for all and inspiration for all, each content and active in his place, I see the Church advancing. It is not a medley of independent levies; it is a united army, under one banner, with one control, one discipline, and one goal. Before its onset—massive, confident, and swift—not even the organized forces of iniquity can stand.

It was some such vision, I must think, that our Captain saw when He beheld the serried muster of unrighteousness, the cruelty of Rome, the lust of Greece, the fanaticism of Jewry; when He saw, rising in opposition to those consolidated and effective evils, the trembling groups

of disorganized believers; and when, in the sorrow of what was and the hope of what might be, He prayed for His disciples, as still He prays for His sundered churches,

That they all may be one.

VIII

The Peace of the Churches

STRANGELY enough, tho the spirit of sectarianism is chiefly responsible for the disturbance of the Church, its advocates claim for it the great advantage of peace. "In a denomination," they allege, "there is no wrangling over doctrines and methods, as all think alike; but attempt to unite the sects and there will be interminable disputes, culminating in violent ruptures that will leave their baneful scars for generations."

Alas for Christians, when such things may be said of them freely and without rebuke! Alas for the long, sad history that seems to justify the charge!

For is it not an admitted disgrace when brothers of the flesh can not live together, when it must be said of them that they will keep the peace only apart?

And how must we regard spiritual brothers whose only guaranty of peace is separation, especially when their Elder Brother is the Prince of Peace?

Brothers, born of the self-same Spirit of Love, believe them not! While He dwells in us there are always pos-

sible for us such miracles of amity that unbelievers, seeing us, shall cry, "How these Christians love one another!"

But aside from our trust in the fundamentals of our religion and our confidence in the goodness of the average Christian, we can refute the argument with the fact.

For are union bodies, largely representative, more exposed to quarrels than sectarian or sectional bodies? Universal experience proves the contrary. Has our national Congress ever witnessed scenes as stormy as those that have vexed State legislatures—mob violence, night barricades, the interference of the military? And the rare personal encounters that smirch the history of Congress, is their like to be found in the long and rapidly lengthening record of international congresses and commissions, tho often the latter are in charge of cases that involve the bitter passions of the nations? "*Tavern* brawls," "*village* brawls," we say; but large interests sober men, and give them dignity.

The principle is most pointedly illustrated in the great interdenominational religious movements that have sprung up within a century, and that are furnishing convincing proof of the entire feasibility of Church union.

There have been disputes in denominational mission boards—serious disputes, even to the point of denominational rupture; but when the blessed ecumenical missionary conventions assemble, or in the informal consultations of missionary secretaries from all denominations that are growing ever more frequent and influential, the utmost harmony prevails.

In the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations and in the closely associated Student Volunteer Movement, where all sects meet, they have never found it anything but easy to work together in the spirit of love.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, its membership drawn from all the churches, has confronted serious and earnest differences of opinion as to method, but maintains its Christian sisterhood with peace and augmenting power.

In the denominational young people's societies the disputes are not infrequent, and have even reached the courts, while the interdenominational Christian Endeavor Society, reaching into eighty denominations, and covering all lands, holds enormous conventions and maintains the closest fellowship in work, and has never known a quarrel.

In the Sunday-schools, whatever unrest and disturbance has arisen has not sprung from the interdenominational management. Where the workers gather from all the churches, in International Lesson Committee, or Executive Committee, or Convention, or Editors' Association, or in the smaller State and county conventions, or the city Bible-study classes, they meet as Brothers of the Book.

These illustrations might be greatly extended, and might include the tract societies, the associated charities, the municipal reform leagues, evangelistic campaigns, and many other union labors of the churches.

The commonest remark in these noble assemblies and associations is upon their victorious brotherhood. "Why, one can not tell Baptist from Methodist! No one knows who is Presbyterian or Lutheran or Congregationalist." This is said, over and over, in delighted surprise. The wonder is that it should be a wonder.

Attention can not too frequently be directed to the fact that there already exist, peacefully, in most, if not all, denominations, differences as wide-spread as those that separate the sects and hold them apart. That would seem to reduce the sectarian argument to an absurdity.

In the West you will find the Methodist church of Eggleston's stories, the church of the circuit-rider, the camp-meeting, and exhilaration. But in Toronto it is the cathedral church, the church of the cultured aristocrat.

I have known in the heart of New England a Congregational church with an Episcopalian liturgy, where surpliced priest and marching choir omitted no devout detail.

The permitted variations of Calvinism one may find among Presbyterian ministers, the liberty of close or open communion allowed to Baptist churches, the striking differences in spirit and method found in the Broad, Low, and High churches of the Church of England and the Episcopal churches of this country, similar variations among the Lutherans—all these, and many more that might be cited, would easily suffice, in less enlightened days, to furnish bases for new sects.

That the sects are not formed, that Christian brethren of differing belief, and sometimes widely differing belief, find it possible to live together in one Church, to do a great work together, to be proud of their Church and happy in it, and to lose in their cooperative labors the sense of their differences and sometimes the differences themselves, is evidence that the like is possible on a larger scale.

What causes disputes in local churches when they lamentably arise? Is it some point of Calvinism or Arminianism? No; it is such a matter as the choice of preachers. Is it the form in which the Lord's Supper shall be administered? No: it is far more likely to be a church fair or the choir.

That is, when a church quarrels within itself, or when neighboring churches quarrel with each other, the question at issue is not some point of doctrine or mode of administration; it is almost always some personal matter of a kind that would arise no more in a united Church than in the churches as now isolated.

Indeed, as the affairs of a united Church are simpler than the total of its separated components, there would seem to be fewer chances for quarrel. Moreover, they would be conducted with more dignity, and, of necessity, with more system, and both dignity and system make mightily for peace.

For illustration, compare small corporations, so often distracted by petty feuds, with the massive, quiet workings of the great corporations. Is not a General Conference, a General Assembly, more impressive, orderly, and peaceful than a local conference or a presbytery? Are not senates, representing wide areas

of population, more dignified and serene than lower houses?

When we think of Church union, why do we fly to picturing always the clash of diverse doctrines? Why not think of the simplifying of machinery?

Here are three little churches uniting in one strong church. One pastor to choose, perhaps, instead of three; and certainly no more minds about him in the three churches than in the one, for that would be impossible. One choir instead of three, and only one choir-leader. One organist instead of three. One Sunday-school superintendent. One janitor. One set of church finances. One "ladies' aid" society. In fine, only one instead of three of each of the causes that chiefly make trouble among Christians when they set out to work together. Would not that mean more peace?

But, more than on anything else, I should rely for the peace of the united Church on the unifying power of enthusiastic and successful work. The defeated political party, the party in opposition, is always the one that is chiefly torn by factions. Victory brings peace and union. Defeated churches, churches making little or no progress against the world, churches discouraged and barely holding their own, are quite invariably churches torn by schisms. But a united Church, strong and exultant in its new

power, rejoicing in the new ease with which it works, inspired by new fellowship with men and new communion with God, seeing its enemies falling on this side and that, such a Church would look back with horror and shame on the old days of discord and division, and henceforth not to love the brethren and labor side by side would be held the major heresy, as indeed it is.

As men work together differences disappear. The longer a business partnership is maintained, if it is a righteous partnership, the more smoothly it runs. Husband and wife, after years of joy and sorrow together, come even to look alike, and always to think alike and act alike. Large families of children are notoriously better behaved and more peaceful than small families.

On the contrary, an isolated life, a lonely life, grows ever more crabbed, more opinionated, more harshly individual. And the longer one lives apart the more his disagreeable peculiarities become accented.

It is so with the denominations. Every year that union is postponed our angularities become more acute and union becomes more difficult. Every decade of union, after it blessedly comes, will teach us how better to live together, and will assimilate us more perfectly in doctrine and methods.

Oh, thou Prince of Peace, we join in Thy prayer for that day! May it speedily arrive. May Thy children see that if they live together and work together their differences will melt away in Thy glad smile of approval. As we take up the prayer of Thy birthday, "Peace on earth, good will to men," that prayer of the angels, so may we receive and make our own—eagerly our own—Thine own prayer of the death-day,

That they all
may be
one.

IX

Truth is One

CHRIST said most solemnly and emphatically, "I am the Truth." He is the Truth as to nature. Without Him was not anything made that hath been made. He is the Truth as to spirit. The words that He has spoken are spirit and life. And as Christ is One and can not deny Himself or contradict Himself, so harmoniously and absolutely must Truth be one.

Regarding the natural world, men everywhere see this to be so. Even in the days of Copernicus it was perceived that he and Ptolemy could not both be right. However men may speculate on the cause of gravity, all agree that there can be but one cause; and as to Newton's laws, there are not two possible ways of viewing them. Spectrum analysis is one, and not susceptible of Old School and New School schisms. The properties of a chemical element known for one laboratory are known for all laboratories. Science is one.

Theology also should be a science, and one. While the lower truth, the truth as to things, is a unit, it may not be that the higher truth, the truth as to

souls, is diverse. God is one. His trinity but illustrates in three spheres His unity. On radiating lines, the farther you go from the center the more difficult is it to perceive the common origin. Therefore it should be hard to trace a unity among *things,* and easier to see the unity as, in the realm of spirit, we draw closer to the great spiritual Source of all.

The distractions of theology are a standing reproach to religious men. Shall we not see more clearly as we approach the Light? Has God two minds about Himself, or two hundred? Shall the children of the world see eye to eye in regard to aluminum and the larva of *Vanessa Antiopa,* but the children of God dispute about their Father and His ways?

Admitting, as all must admit, that the higher the knowledge the more difficult is the science, and the loftiest of all is the knowledge of God, yet no science but theology has interpreted itself. The stars have not sent Orion to unfold in the colleges of earth the secrets of the heavens. The trilobite and dinosaur nor even Pliocene man has revisited earth to disclose the story of the rocks. No chemical element has found a voice to whisper from a test-tube the hidden things of matter. But theology is unique among the sciences, in that it has sent from among its mysteries a Teacher, has

brought its farthest facts near, and displayed the Infinite in daily life.

What a defeat to Christ's revelation of God are our quarreling theologies! What a disappointment, what an anti-climax, what a distruction of the hopes of heaven!

There is One body, and One spirit, even as also ye were called in One hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all.

ONE Lord. Christ is not divided. He was not one Christ to Peter and another to John and another to Thomas. Men went away from Him reporting different things, but not diverse things, not contradictory things. We have four Gospels, but the four are one.

ONE Lord. Not a Baptist Christ, and a Methodist Christ, and a Reformed-Church-in-the-United-States Christ, but ONE Christ.

"But," it is argued by the sectaries, "may there not be different views of one person, tho he is but one? Is not Napoleon admired by some and despised by others? Are there not two quite distinct ideas regarding Cromwell's character? Is not Joan of Arc viewed diversely by different historians? Of your

own acquaintances, is there a man of whom all the town thinks alike?"

True; there are varying views of Calvin even among Presbyterians, perhaps as many different views as there are Presbyterians. Wesley and Luther present diverse aspects to this Methodist and that, to this Lutheran and that. Each thinks his own Calvin, Wesley, Luther, to be the true one. But, nevertheless, each does not go straightway and found a sect, but he remains a Presbyterian, a Methodist, or a Lutheran. And if there are formed, as of course there are, sects among the followers of a human teacher, many Lutheran bodies, many Wesleyan bodies, many Calvinistic, it is entirely evident that only one of each sect, if, indeed, one, can represent Luther or Wesley or Calvin wholly.

And if it is a wrong to take a half-Calvin and exalt him into a church called Calvinist, or a half-Wesley or a half-Luther and make of them churches called Wesleyan or Lutheran, how much more evil is it to take half-Christ, and call the church Christian!

It is not to the point to say that each sect honestly thinks that it embodies all-Christ. Man is a reasoning being, and it is plain to any child that if any one sect is right in the claim, the other ninety-nine sects are wrong.

Indeed, in the presence of these multiplied bodies of Christian believers, all showing forth the beautiful spirit of Christ, and full, every one of them, of Christly deeds, when any sect lays claim to all-Christ, that very claim is instant proof that a most important part of Christ is lacking—His humility.

Yet Christ is ONE, and all His churches should have Him, and all of Him. Complacently to say, "Oh, the different denominations simply get different views of Christ," is scandalously to underestimate the importance of Christian truth. If there is any view of Christ important enough to warrant the establishment of a sect upon it, it is important enough for all to need it; it is vital. To acquiesce in the continuance of sects is to be content that the churches should continue to know only half-Christs.

And One faith. If in the realm of sight Christians may not be allowed to part company, how much less in the land of closed eyes! Yet it is precisely here that the sectaries find their most plausible excuse.

"For how," they ask, "can we see eye to eye when we can not see at all? or only through a glass darkly? In this realm of mystery, are not confusions unavoidable? Where all must 'stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,' can we maintain a phalanx? Nay, can we not

proceed better through the darkness in small parties?"

No! There is ONE faith. And her hands are not lame and groping, but perfect, strong, and sure. Faith is substance, and not shadow; evidence, and not obscurity. Faith is a shield, faith is a foundation, faith is all that is tangible, concrete, stable, and permanent.

If in the realm of faith we can not see, it is not because of darkness, but excess of light; because faith leads us nearest to the Great White Throne whereon is seated the dazzling Sun of Righteousness.

No; by faith and not by sight we perceive the blessed fact of the atonement. When we try to measure that glowing truth our tape line is burned off. We can not define it any more than an artist can draw that pulsing, infinitely varied thing, the sun's corona. For the atonement is the Corona of the Sun of Righteousness.

But this faith in the atonement is ONE faith. There is but one corona, tho no two transits of the moon show us the same vision.

By faith and not by sight we come to know the inspiration of the Bible. It is the Holy Spirit, and not human intelligence, that takes the deep things of the

Book and reveals them to us. His Spirit bears witness with our spirits that these words are His, and with no other book do we have such an experience. The Bible comes to the reverent reader not as writing but as speaking, and when we try to define its inspiration it is like trying to put a voice under a microscope.

There are many theories of inspiration, but there is only this ONE faith in the inspired Book. As we debate theories we form sects; but the more we rejoice together in this faith, the closer is our Christian unity.

So is it with the other mysteries of theology, those blinding electric glories where the finite touches the infinite. Of them all there are endless theories, because the finite can not understand the infinite; our little human history, our restricted experiences, afford a base-line too short to give us a parallax. But they are all true, and we know them to be true, but not by theories. We shall know them none the less but far more when we stop theorizing about them, and admit the evidential value of faith. For in regard to them all there is ONE faith, rising calm and beautiful from the clashing surges of thought; and as we rest upon that ONE faith the churches will be one.

And ONE baptism. How strange that this rite, performed in all-dissolving, all-uniting water, should cause the most

persistent of schisms in the body of Christ! that this token of our separation from the world of sin and union with our Redeemer should separate us from one another! It is well that the Savior left us few rites, since we find in the few so much occasion for mischief.

There is but ONE baptism, that into the name, the character, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The reality of the baptism is proved by unity of character, God in us and we in God. An equal proof, and one too commonly neglected, is union with all that have thus united with God, "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee."

The baptism that alone can be the ONE baptism of our Lord can not result in sectarian divisions. Those that receive it have all things common, having in common the ONE in whom all things subsist. Where the spirit of division is, the spirit of baptism can not be. Where the schism among Christ's followers concerns this very matter of baptism, that schism is well-nigh blasphemy. It is divorce at the marriage altar; it is poison in the communion cup.

O my brothers, for a twelvemonth let us cease to regard one another, whether our neighbors are baptized in due form or not, and let each one of us in anxious humility examine only his

own heart, and ask of himself alone this vital question, "Have *I* entered into the ONE baptism, into the character of God, which is love?"

If all would do that, long before the year's end Christians, united in the spiritual baptism, in fear and shame and love would have united in the material baptism, and agreement in the meaning would have compelled agreement on the mode.*

And ONE God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

If we know anything at all about this ONE BEING, we know that He has a passion for unity. With all its infinite diversity, the universe is one. Not a sparrow but is knit by a thousand ties to the Pleiades. Through leaf and comet, scarabee and Phidias, Matterhorn and pencil-tip, reach the same pervading laws of gravity and chemic force, heat and light, form and color. Pulsations of the same ether, relations of the same elements, affinities the most minute and unexpected, bind them together. All the world and all worlds are proofs of the

* Note that I do not even imply what that agreement would be; frankly, I have no idea, and can not range myself on either side of this controversy among men of wisdom and godliness. I am only sure that there would be an agreement.

unimaginable differences that may exist within the bosom of perfect unity.

And while it is in nature, in the realm of physics, in the evolution of the planets, in the progress of plant and animal life, that God, being undisturbed, most clearly discloses His unity, yet He has made even the schismatic wrath of man to praise Him, and His providence has knit into one fabric even the contrary warp and woof of human history. Through the ages one increasing purpose runs. Alcibiades is linked with Talleyrand, Jeroboam with Bismarck. Through a thousand years sixty-six books will be written, but the thousand years with God are as a day, and at the close the Bible is discovered to be one.

How is God chagrined by the caricature we have drawn of Him! a hundred-headed monster, each head with a separate altar!

He who has so stamped upon us His one image that every bone in one man is matched by bones in all the others, yes, and every branching nerve, how must He be displeased when we can not kneel to Him in the same Church!

He who has made truth one, and the highest truth most indubitably one, what wrath and sorrow must fill His heart when we tear His truth to tatters, and each bows down before a shred of it!

And after this long waiting and these many follies, what joy would fill the councils of the Most High if men would yield themselves to the ONE Spirit, and be led by Him at last to the ONE truth, the ONE baptism, and the ONE faith, and to the ONE Lord, whose dying prayer was, as His living and perpetual prayer is,

That they all
may be
one!

X

The Search for Truth

ALL the truth that God wants us to know is discoverable. If there is any truth that God withholds from us, it is because we can not discover it. Whatever truth is discovered is found to be one with all other truth.

If two persons, both seeking the truth on any matter, discover discord, they have not found the truth. One may have found it, or each may have found part of it, but both can not have found it, or they would have been agreed.

There is often told, in defense of the sects, the story of the knights that approached a shield from opposite sides. One declared it a golden shield, the other insisted that it was silver. They were about coming to blows, the story runs, when a sage passed by and showed the knights "that both were right," since the shield was gold on one side and silver on the other. Thus, the application is made, all sects are right, each honestly seeing one side of the truth.

But really the sage was wrong, because both knights were wrong, as all sectarianism is wrong. It was not a gold shield and a silver shield, but a

gold-and-silver shield. The truth about one thing is never learned till we have looked on all sides of it.

No Baptist has learned the truth about baptism until he has viewed it also from the Congregationalist standpoint, and no Congregationalist till he has viewed it also from the Baptist standpoint. The Presbyterian gazes on one side of the truth of election and predestination, the Methodist gazes on the other side; but the truth is learned only by exchanging sides. The Anglican has all his life seen the truth of episcopal ordination and priestly succession from one direction, and the Quaker from the opposite direction; neither is right, because each is half right.

Now it is one of the most difficult things in the world to change one's mental viewpoint, to see a thing through another's eyes. It involves the absurdity of lifting one's self by one's boot-straps, of being in two places at the same time; because there is no profit (since there is no comparison and no uniting) in seeing through another's eyes unless at the same time you see through your own. We must contrive the impossible; we must look on both sides of the shield at once.

"Put yourself in his place." As this is the center of theological disclosures, it is also the fundamental principle in the study of theology.

It needs the poet's imagination, the god-like insight that perceives what another's place is, and that it is not one's own. But that is not enough, for poets are notably bad theologians.

It needs the Christ's self-sacrifice. Only as one's self, one's pride and prejudice and preference, is nailed to the cross, can one really get far enough away from self to see a truth through another's eyes. Thus the way of the cross, the way of self-abnegation, is the way of theology, of a complete understanding of God.

And therefore, tho it is one of the most difficult things in the world to change one's mental viewpoint, it is difficult only as essential Christianity is difficult. To one who is crucified with Christ it is not difficult, but easy; not easy, but necessary. And this is only one added to the many, many reasons why the progress of Christianity is dependent upon the union of Christians.

For truth is discoverable, thus discoverable, the whole truth, through humility, sympathy, active love, and self-denial. Sects may logically be built upon undiscoverable truth—logically, but how foolishly and wrongfully! Sects may never be built wisely upon discoverable truth, for that truth, the whole truth, is one, and to be obtained by all.

There is far too little study of doctrines, far too little discussion of them. Theology is the loftiest theme that can occupy the human mind; politics is next in rank. Why are these topics tabooed from polite conversation? We may talk about Slade, the murderer, but not about the Creator of life; about the bubbles on the social wave, but not about the Flood of Years. We may discuss persons but not principles, transitories but not eternities. Even our religious papers would look coldly on an essay on regeneration, tho written by a Phillips Brooks, but would welcome with both hands an article on the defacement of landscapes by advertising, the author being Dabsky, the infidel artist. And as for pulpit discourses, what preacher would dare to announce a series of "doctrinal sermons"? What parishioner but utters those words in a deprecating tone?

Whence this dislike of doctrinal studies? Whence but from our sectarian divisions?

In the past, theological discussions have been conducted quite uniformly in the wrong spirit, and the sad result is the sects. Men have debated theology rather than studied it; they have sought to compel assent to their opinion rather than by comparison of views to discover the truth; their motive has been conquest rather than insight, and the product has

been not theology but dogma. How seldom have men approached a theological subject in a spirit of tender, loving sympathy with those of opposing judgment! How seldom have they sought honestly, and first of all, to "put themselves in their place," learn precisely their motives, attitude, and reasons! How seldom are even their arguments reported fairly, to say nothing of the far more important temper and purpose back of the arguments! And so—ah, most lamentable of all earthly sights!—lovers of the same Lord have come to hate and despise one another, and these gashes have been made in the body of Christ.

Of all this the churches, pastors and people, editors and readers, are profoundly weary and ashamed. We have come to see the sin, the monstrous and illogical sin, of theological wrangling, which is as one would say cold fire or hateful love. We dread to fall into the sin again, and we avoid it in the wrong way.

For the cause of theological wrangling is not theology; it is wrangling. Theology is the study of God, who is Love. It is impossible to study theology except in the spirit of love. Love is the atmosphere of theology, as accuracy is the atmosphere of chemistry and idealization the atmosphere of mathematics. A theologian must be a lover; and the more

theological study and discussion there is, the more love will there be in the world. This must be true, if God, the one subject of theology, is Love.

To say this is to condemn much "theology" as dogma and many "theologians" as sectaries; yet is not the condemnation necessary and just?

But let us not involve the healthful in our avoidance of the disease. Dislike of doctrine, the shunning of theology, accompanies always the decadence of a Church. That we have fallen into such an attitude bodes ill for the cause of Christ.

Compliance is easy: "Fall in with the opinion of others; they are not far wrong, probably. And they are good fellows."

Cynicism is easy: "What is truth? Who can lay hands on it? The heretic of to-day is the persecuting orthodox of to-morrow."

Liberalism is easy: "Live and let live. He has a right to his opinion, and I have a right to mine. One is about as good as another, no doubt."

How contemptible are such expressions to a lover of truth—how contemptible and dangerous! How they degrade man and God! How treasonable are they to reason and revelation!

Opposing views are never a matter of indifference to a lover of truth, for one is false or both are partial; and falsehood is never "as good as" truth, nor half views as whole views. And truth is permanent. What is true to-day is true to-morrow, and forever. And truth, the whole truth, is discoverable.

That is the doctrine of the truth-lover, a doctrine that scorns compliance and liberalism and cynical indifference, and with more than knightly ardor seeks its Holy Grail.

For there is no chivalry so fine as the love of truth. Indeed, all chivalry is based upon it and woven with it. It is courageous. Is truth at the pole? No icy terrors can daunt it. Or in the heart of Mauna Loa? It will find a way thither. It is companionable. It forgets itself in its quest. It throws its arms around a brother, and they are one. It trusts all men. It seeketh not its own.

"An open mind!" How rare it is! A mind whose door is not barred against the stranger, and its windows closed against the breezes of heaven. A mind to which all pure influences have instant access. A mind ungrudgingly hospitable to truth, to all truth. Comes truth in any guise, as a beggar, a bandit, or a king, it is detected at once, and welcomed. How rare is such a mind!

But we may all have it, for we may have the mind of Christ. If He, according to His promise, dwells in us and we in Him, can we not, without wrangling, discuss theology, the lore of His Father? Nay, shall we turn with eager longing to any theme else? And as in the spirit of Christ we talk together of the great eternal issues, as we permit the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, in the sacred search we shall draw close to one another, and fast as we find the truth we shall find the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer

That they all may be one.

XI

"Hush! Hush!"

THERE are many that say: "The real foes of union among the churches are those that agitate the subject. They keep denominational differences before the public, and make it impossible for the churches to forget them. It is like the constant shaking of a broken bone, that prevents its knitting. The churches are doing well enough. If they will only keep quiet, these would-be unifiers, all will come around in God's good time."

That sounds pious, and the plea has been used with effect against all reforms since the world began. Rugged Jeremiah heard it and cried with scorn: "They have healed the hurt of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace."

"Hush! hush! Let well enough alone." That is always the plea of conservatism and timidity.

But if there were a gaping wound in your friend's body, would you let it alone? Your friend might be a strong man, the juices of health flowing freely; but would you let the wound alone? No;

you would wash it out, close it up, stitch it firmly, bandage it, dress it often till it was healed. And if you would do that for your friend, how much the more if the Friend is Christ!

Or, to drop the unpleasant but just simile and pass to one more pleasing, if two of your friends were hostile and would not speak to each other, could you, loving and admiring them both, knowing the joy of friendship with each, daily thrown into awkward straits by their enmity, could you avoid learning the cause of their quarrel, going to each, and trying to bring them together? And especially if you saw that they needed each other, that they were weaker for their life's work without each other, and that the quarrel was a constant grief to them, then, loving and admiring them both, would you not think the cry, "Hush! hush!" a cry treasonable to the sacred name of friendship?

And even if the cause of enmity were ancient and almost forgotten, and your two friends had passed from active hostility to dull tolerance, and might go further toward each other in the course of years, and after you were dead, could you or should you wait?

It is precisely thus with the denominations. They no longer contend with one another openly. Sometimes they even nod to one another. Perhaps now

and then they speak to one another. But they know nothing of the long intimacies of friendship, the mutual helpfulness of friendship, the preference of one's friend to one's self. They need one another. Each has some element the others lack. Unconsciously they grieve for one another and are ill at ease. For the want of this friendship their service of God falls far below its possibilities. They need, oh, how sadly they need, first to be reconciled to one another, their brothers, and then to come and offer their gifts!

Can one who loves and admires all the denominations and would be a friend to all, under these conditions hold his peace? Must he not himself be ill at ease, continually seeing lost possibilities of friendship? Must he not, however uninfluential, do what he can to bring the denominations together, reconcile differences, remove misunderstandings, tell them about one another, and try to inspire in each for the others the same affection that he feels for all?

And if a man, circumscribed, with little insight, with imperfect ideals and still more clumsy attainment, yet sees these possibilities of Church union, how much more Christ! How tenderly, standing in the midst of His light-givers as John saw Him, the Son of Man loves them all! How He knows their hearts, sees in them the same love for Him, the

same heroic readiness to serve Him, and longs that they should see one another as He understands them all! And how, seeing the array of coherent evil, tenacious, massive, and aggressive, our Lord must long to oppose it with coherent good, massed, enthusiastic, and victorious!

If He speaks this longing, it must be through human lips, mine, unworthy tho they are, and yours, whoever feel the impulse of His wish. Shall we obey those that cry "Hush! hush! Let well enough alone! Let the sects take their time in coming together"?

And, anyway, even were these imperative considerations absent, has silence on this subject allowed the denominations to grow closer together? Does agitation of Church union emphasize the evil?

All Church history proves the contrary. Sectarianism is not, like pneumonia, a disease that must run its course and come to a climax before the patient recovers—or dies. Rather it is like consumption, easily cured at the outset, and becoming more inveterate and more certainly fatal the longer it is tolerated.

Was it keeping still and saying "Peace, peace; let well enough alone," that brought about, four years ago, that blessed union of the Free

Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church, and that glorious procession of reunited brothers—

> "The noblest scene that ever eyes did greet,
> Altho no trumpets blare nor banners flame,
> Gliding along the stage of Prince's Street;
> Heirs of Disruption and Secession fame,
> Marching in concord, joining heart and hand,
> And leaving one less schism in the land."

Was not that happy marriage of the Churches the result of faithful presentation of the evils of disunion, frank and full discussion, prudent yet eager conferences? Would it have been brought about in ten thousand centuries by complacent acquiescence in sectarianism?

Does any one think that the powerful Free Church Federation in England, and its daughter organization in this country, tend by their continual insistence on the value of cooperation to drive the denominations farther apart? Is that the tendency of the Evangelical Alliance? of the Pan-Presbyterian assemblies? of the Ecumenical Missionary Conferences? of Christian Endeavor conventions? of the Student Volunteer Movement? of the International Sunday-school movement? or any other interdenominational organization?

Or, if you consider the present agitation of union propositions that is so profoundly stirring eleven different denominations, is that agitation driving

them further apart? Is it not rather impelling them so close together that union in some cases is already certain and in the majority of cases probable? Is the growing desire for union, the increasing willingness to consider plans for union, the result of a *laissez-faire* policy? No! it has come as all good things come, as the result of faithful, persistent, hopeful endeavor.

It is not a negative agitation that is thus promoting Church union, no campaign of criticism and reproach, of discouraging raillery and condemnation. It has recognized likenesses rather than exhibited differences. It has applauded progress rather than bemoaned stagnation and retroaction. It has shown the desirable rewards of Church union and made men long for it as Christ does. In all this it has but imitated Christ, and so it has succeeded and is succeeding.

Whose duty is it to agitate for Church union, to stand for it and promote it?

Surely it is the duty of all that love Christ, and feel the irresistible appeal of His desire.

Especially is it the duty of those upon whom Christ has placed the responsibility of leadership in the Church: bishops, moderators, superintendents, elders, deacons, secretaries of boards, editors of

religious papers, teachers in Sunday-schools, leaders of prayer-meetings—above all, the ministers of the Gospel. If it is the desire, as assuredly it is the desire, of our Lord that all His Churches be one, and if, as assuredly is the case, they are now very far from being one, it is the duty of our Church leaders to lead the Churches into obedience, in this as in all other particulars, to the will of Christ.

But if you are in no post of authority, if you are not one to whom the churches justly look for leadership, yet recognition of Christ's will is always sufficient authority for you to lead men toward it. Still, even as in Isaiah's day, is there need of prophets. Still God's people need healing, and still the Lord cries, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And still the most heroic accents man can utter, tho from unclean lips and with a slow tongue, are, "Here am I; send me." Prophets of union! Prophets of obedience! Prophets of brotherhood! God send us an Isaiah in every sect!

"Hush! hush! Peace! peace! Let well enough alone, ye troublers of Israel!" Prophets of union, heed no such cry. They will charge disloyalty to the Church; but you know a loyalty of which they do not dream. They will urge postponement, and again postpone-

ment; but you know that nineteen hundred years has been postponement sadly sufficient.

Ah, the ignominy of seeing a great truth, of feeling it in every thrilling sense, of bowing before it and owning allegiance to it, and yet of remaining silent! If a man would dwarf his soul, and lose his grasp of all things high, let him know the best, and speak and live the second best! Ideals, apprehended in awe and silence, are given for proclamation; and it is not only for His disciples in the upper room, "but for them also that believe on me *through their word*," that we hear our Savior pray

That they all
may be
one.

XII

Churches and Men

DENOMINATIONS of Christians should be as good as Christians. The same laws of Christian conduct that apply to individuals apply to groups of individuals, however extensive. Neglect of this truth is largely responsible for sectarianism. Conviction of it and application of it would carry us far toward Church union.

Everywhere and in all matters it is the tendency to hold masses of men to standards different from those we apply to individuals. A powerful nation bullies a weaker one as no strong man, without disgrace, could bully a cripple; but the nation gets credit by the performance. Two Christian nations, of kindred race, fight each other, to the waste of enormous sums, the blotting out of thousands of lives, the maiming of thousands more, the darkening of thousands of homes. And the cause for which they fight? Such as the laws would not permit two individual citizens to fight about, but they must seek the peaceful arbitrament of courts.

Similarly, corporations are allowed to enrich themselves by modes that in single men would be called highway robbery. Political parties are allowed to nullify their platform promises in ways that in an individual voter would be called lying. The ease with which a person may be called to account, and the vast difficulty of calling to account a corporation, a party, or a nation, have blinded us to the identity of ethics in both cases. It is more convenient to believe that these unwieldy masses of men have their own righteousness, and are not to be weighed in the ordinary scales of justice. Thus when mobs commit murder, and nations cheat and lie and steal and brag, we forget the men that are doing these things, and attribute them to a vague, irresponsible impersonality. Not so God.

In olden times men held similar views regarding nature. Two concentric spheres upon a table would fall together; but they fancied the sky a dome of glass, in which the stars were golden studs, and never asked what held it up. Other music could be heard, but not the music of the spheres. The great seas were peopled with marvelous creatures. Only recently have we come to judge the unknown from the known, to recognize in Sirius the gravity and chemistry of our kitchens. And even yet we fancy for solar systems of men a set of laws tran-

scending the government of their component clods.

Nevertheless, if each brick in a kiln is hot, the kiln is baking; if each atom in the iron is electrified, the iron is electrified, the iron is magnetic; if each drop in the glass contains strychnine, the water is poison; and, in spite of our foolish thinking, a band of men is bad or good as each man is bad or good. Association excuses no sin.

If Christ were to dictate letters to-day to the Churches, would He write otherwise than to the seven of Asia? Would He not test them just as He would test John or Paul or Timothy? "Thou hast not grown weary." "Thou didst leave thy first love." "Thou holdest fast my name." "Thou art lukewarm." "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." "Thou sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing." "Be zealous, and repent." "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne." Is not this as Christ would deal with persons? There is no hint, in Scripture or reason, that denominations are to be judged otherwise.

Let us apply some of the fundamental laws of Christ to the Christian sects as we know them.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," wrote Paul, "and so fulfil the law of Christ." To be sure, he soon added, "Each man shall bear his own burden," shall do for himself all that he can; but Christ knows how much there is that no man can do for himself, bear he up never so stoutly, and all through the ages Christ's followers have understood and measurably practised the law of mutual helpfulness.

It would seem to be the simplest logic in the world to extend this law to bodies of Christians in their relations to one another; yet whenever, in conversing even with the most self-denying Christians, I have suggested that the denominations should "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ," I have been stared at as a madman.

Nevertheless, mad or not, I believe that some glad day, when the Baptist foreign missionary society faces a deficit, the Methodists will take special collections in all their churches to make that deficit good. When the Presbyterians hear of a Methodist home mission school out in Idaho that is likely to be abandoned for lack of funds, they will make an appropriation for it. When the Episcopalians learn that the denominational newspaper of the Quakers is inadequately supported, they will get up clubs for it. When the Baptists see that a Con-

gregational college needs an endowment, they will furnish it. When statistics show a falling off in additions to Presbyterian churches, the Disciples will institute a canvass on their behalf.

Is not that the way individual Christians bear one another's burdens—by gifts of money, and time, and sympathetic co-operation, "edifying" one another, building one another up? Will any one show in what other ways denominations could bear one another's burdens?

No one that has entered into the spirit of Christianity can doubt that such deeds would cause the heart of our Redeemer to leap for joy.

The denomination that will first raise money to relieve from debt the mission board of another denomination will introduce an era in the world's history second only to the introduction of Christianity.

Another law of our blessed religion is the law of humility. How, by example and precept, this fundamental virtue is insisted on! "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first." "He that findeth his life shall lose it; he that loseth his life shall find it." "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." "I say to every man not to think of himself more highly than he

ought to think." "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own." "Be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." "*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.* HAVE THIS MIND IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS."

Every precept in that familiar list rests as solemnly upon denominations of Christians as upon individual Christians. What is selfishness in one does not become proper prudence in a million. What is boastfulness in one does not become just enthusiasm in a million. What is unholy ambition in one does not become holy enterprise in a million. What is self-absorption in one does not become devotion to God in a million. The spirit of a denomination is to be approved or condemned by the same tests that try the spirit of a man.

How do the denominations stand this test of humility? Do they seek to be last, or to be first? Do they attempt to lose their lives in lowly service, or to find them in conspicuous success? Do

they seek great things for one another, or for themselves? Do they think of themselves more highly than others think of them, or less highly? Do they envy one another's achievements, or exult in them? Do they boast of their own statistics, or of the statistics of other denominations that excel their own? Do they refuse to look on their own successes, and dwell delightedly on the accomplishments of other denominations, in sincere lowliness of mind preferring one another, each counting other better than itself? Have the denominations this mind in them, which was also in Christ Jesus?

Oh, brothers, brothers! How can we cultivate, in others and ourselves, this priceless virtue of humility, while press and pulpit and the conversation of Christians so often exhibit denominational braggadocio? "We raise more money for missions than any other denomination." "We had more accessions last year than any other denomination." "Our denomination is the biggest." "Ours is the most intelligent." "We are having revivals and the others aren't." "We have the best hymn-book." "Ours are the best papers." "Our church polity is the winner." "We sent out more missionaries last year than any other denomination." "We have the most Sunday-schools." "Well, ours are the best, any way." "We made the big-

gest gains last year." "But we made the biggest gains the last decade." How like the talk of disagreeable children! How utterly unworthy the followers of the meek and lowly Savior!

"But if our denomination *is* the best, why not say so, and persuade every one else to join it?"

Because no one is persuaded in that way. And especially because your denomination is not the best, nor is any denomination the best, but each is best in some few particulars. It becomes Christians, singly or as churches, to recognize and praise the best in others, and modestly to leave it to others to recognize and praise the best in themselves.

"But how, if we do not talk about our denominational superiorities, can we cultivate denominational loyalty?"

How did Christ? "And I, *if I be lifted up from the earth,* will draw all men unto myself. But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die."

In hoc signo vincimus. It is the cross, the cross, that makes conquest of the world. Would a Christian denomination draw all men to itself? Like its Lord, let it be raised upon a cross. In lowly self-abnegation let it give itself for sinful men.

There is no attraction like the attraction of service, no popularity like the popularity of ministers.

The first denomination that gains the lovely spirit of humility, that actually strives to be least of all and the servant of all, that makes no brag nor receives honor from men, that really prefers others to itself, studies their excellencies and forgets its own, and does all this, not in order that, being last, it may become first, but because it has won the character of the Nazarine—that denomination will gain everlasting glory in the annals of the kingdom of heaven.

And so, not to insist further, must it be with all other principles that are binding on Christian men; their obligation binds also the Christian denominations. Must a man avoid the spirit of suspicion, hope all things of others, believe all things of others? So must the denominations cease to suspect one another, and begin to hope and believe all good of one another. Must a man be not easily provoked, when smitten on one cheek must he turn the other? So must denominations be long suffering, and not quick to resent injuries. Must a man, when he has done wrong, repent, and bring forth the fruits of repentance? Even so a denomination. Let us read our New Testaments not only by our-

selves but by denominations, standing between Ebal and Gerizim!

And as with this wider consciousness upon us we come to study Christ's teachings and apply them in the wider sphere as in the narrower, in the one as in the other they will destroy selfishness which is the basis of schism, and Christ's own words will bring to pass His prayer,

That they all may be one.

XIII

Union Prayer-Meetings

THE weekly meeting of Christians for prayer and conference! Is it not inevitable, if we would succeed in our Father's business? What secular business could progress without similar meetings for mutual inspiration and counsel? Must not even the savage tribe have its council fire?

And yet in many a town and church, and even in an entire denomination, they are talking of the failure of the prayer-meeting, and are planning to give it up, or have already abandoned it.

There is a room dismally large for the dispirited little company that have gathered. There is a discouraged pastor, doggedly setting about a forlorn task. There is a number of women, but they seldom or never add to the meeting save by their silent presence. There are a few men, desperately groping in their minds for a thought or expression that constant use through years of long fidelity has not worn threadbare. There are some young people, abashed by the gloom and awkwardness. There is a quavering thread of song.

It is the same faithful few, year after year. It is the same half hour of minister, and quarter hour of feeble song, and quarter hour of "participation."

Rare, indeed, is a strange face, the thrill of a new voice. Still more rare is the feeling of eagerness, the note of reality, the communication of life, prayer that must be prayed, testimony that must be given—glad, grateful, impulsive, victorious.

Usually this meeting, that should be for all Christians a reservoir of power, has to be "kept up." It should be an unfailing treasury of inspiration, guidance, and cheer; but it is a depressing failure, or as near to it as anything connected with the Church of Christ can be. No wonder that in many places it is dropped or its character changed to a lecture.

I know that to many of my readers this description will seem like a caricature, almost impious, and wholly untrue. The prayer-meetings in their church are warm, glowing, and vital, all, or nearly all, that such meetings should be. But no one with a wide outlook over the churches, and especially no one familiar with the average conditions in villages and in the country, but will recognize the picture I have drawn as sadly true in the majority of cases.

There are many causes of this prayer-meeting failure where it exists. One of them, for instance, is the neglect to utilize the young people trained in their own prayer-meetings, providing an atmosphere of brightness, warmth, and invitation, providing a place for them, and systematically pushing them into that place till they are wonted to it.

But in most cases I think that the fundamental cause of prayer-meeting failure is the isolation of sects. In the country and the village, in the suburbs and new sections of cities and the "down-town" districts, often in the very heart of the residence sections, no single church has enough material for a good, well-sustained, easily running prayer-meeting.

The natural or acquired ability to pray in public—I do not say eloquently, but vitally, in such wise as to carry other hearts with the prayer—is not common. I believe in brief prayers, in the "sentence prayers" of young people's societies; I would have scores of them in every meeting, till, perhaps, every person present has added his portion to the tidal wave of praise and petition; such prayers are heard of God as gladly as the longer ones, and in their swift aggregate move profoundly the hearts of all hearers; and I believe that every Christian can and should contribute thus

to the prayer-meeting. But, nevertheless, the ability to "*lead* in prayer," to inspire and direct the prayers of others with many words or few, is not common. To make a "prayer-meeting" a meeting of prayer, there are needed as many such prayer leaders as are likely to be found in several churches.

The other half of the prayer-meeting ideal is expressed in the old terms, "conference meeting" and "experience meeting." It is an assembly in which Christians will tell how Christ has led them, and will "edify" one another, build one another up in the Christian life.

Here, also, tho followers—or at least possible followers—are many, the leaders are few. Every sincere Christian has "experiences" enough every week to furnish an entire experience meeting, just as each life contains material for a great novel. But not every man is a Hawthorne, nor have many Christians the ability to recognize their experiences, analyze their battles, perceive their foes, discern their crises, or describe to others in any helpful or even intelligible fashion the scenes of their inner life. Such a man must be somewhat of a poet and much of a prophet; but poets and prophets do not grow on every bush.

I am in danger of being misunderstood, as if I required for a profitable prayer-meeting an Isaiah or Jeremiah, a Spurgeon or Phillips Brooks. There is an old sea-captain down on Cape Cod, unlettered and humble, who would be the making of any prayer-meeting in Boston. A little Sunday-school teacher of my boyhood days, a quiet, modest mite of a woman—now in heaven, to earth's great loss—spoke timidly and softly, but vitalized every meeting where she was. Such persons, tho they may stammer and use poor English and be afraid, yet have the gift of prophesying; and we have Paul's own statement that not all are prophets. Indeed, I am confident that if the prophetic souls, the God-gifted religious teachers, were gathered up from all the churches of an average town, we should have no more than enough to carry one prayer-meeting with the swing of power.

Here again I must say that I would have all take part in this "testifying," as in prayer. The young people's societies show how it is possible. Those societies do a great work in discovering and training the leaders, the prophets; but they also train the followers. Some are not original, but they find some printed word, in sacred literature or secular, and make it expressive of their purpose and desire. They read some hymn, with a word about the author. They write a

few thoughts upon a Bible verse. The rapid massing of their Scripture upon a theme is powerfully effective. Their focussing of many wise quotations is splendidly illuminating. The most inspiring part of many a young people's prayer-meeting is this, and not the original part. We must give all a share in our older gatherings also. But this, too, like the prayers, depends upon the leaders, and they are few. We need to summon them from all the churches. We need union prayer-meetings.

We need them also for the mighty inspiration of numbers. Too long have we pleaded Christ's promise that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in their midst. If the two or three ought to be two or three hundred, it is questionable whether the promise holds.

When that promise was given, the disciples were few. It was "the church in the house" of Phœbe, or Tertius, or Cornelius. They were persecuted, and large gatherings were unsafe, impossible. For them the promise to the "two or three" was needful and precious, as it occasionally is to us.

But where it is not needful, is it precious or operative? Where attendance on Christian assemblies is not only safe but honored? Where Christians have the majority and the power? Where

the need of the world, the ability of the church, and all comforts, conveniences, and opportunities call for crowded, enthusiastic gatherings? Under such circumstances to plead that ancient promise to "two or three" is pusillanimous.

When Lafayette crossed the Atlantic to aid the struggling patriots of our Revolution, he was content to be met by two or three; but when, years afterward, he returned to see the powerful and prosperous nation that he had helped to establish, he expected to be welcomed by great throngs, and he was. What would he have said of American gratitude if he had been greeted only by the primitive "two or three"?

We need union prayer-meetings for the comparison of views. What is the worth of a council to which only those of one way of thinking are invited?

Does any one seriously fear doctrinal disputes? The larger the meeting and the more impressive, the less are they likely to occur.

Think what it means if two Christian churches *can not* pray better and counsel better together than apart! The early disciples had differences of opinion and of taste quite as marked as those of our day. Peter, John, Thomas—are

three men likely to be more dissimilar? And doubtless each could have gathered out of five hundred disciples many men closely akin to himself. But what if, after the ascension, Peter had summoned the men of his sort to hold a prayer-meeting with him, and John had called together his kind of men, and Thomas his? Does any one believe that such a church would have received the Holy Ghost?

But no; they were all together, with one accord, in one place. And then came Pentecost.

We need the comparison of divergences to get at the truth; we need the gentle attrition of opposites to smooth angularities; we need the enthusiasm of one set of men, the caution of another, the aggressiveness of a third, the peacefulness of a fourth. We can not afford to let similar men isolate themselves; that is bad for them and for us.

Investigators have just discovered why it is that orchards so often and so mysteriously fail to bear fruit; it is because a variety of kinds is seldom placed together. One kind of cherry-tree has been found to need the pollen of another kind to fructify it. If they are planted together, there is a sure and abundant crop. If they are widely separated, only the accident of favorable winds will result in fruitage. The dis-

covery will immediately diversify our orchards and add enormously to the wealth of the world. Let us apply it at once to the fruit of the Spirit.

And not only for mental and spiritual stimulus and growth do we need union prayer-meetings, but for the exteriors of the meetings, and especially for the singing. How the prayer-meeting would shine and attract if it could draw upon the assembled abilities of a whole Christian community! The most inspiring leaders, and all the time, without being burdensome to any leader. The best singers, for solos and choruses. The best Bible students, to bring forth the treasures of the Word. The best speakers, to uplift and instruct. Those best informed on the missions of many churches, and on the great reforms. Those most gifted in the sacred art of public prayer. Those who, tho not leaders, are swift to follow, and to carry their comrades with them. A galaxy of skill and power and experience and wisdom, all shining in the prayer-meeting! Is there any doubt that this would solve in all communities the problem of the prayer-meeting, transforming a perplexity and chagrin into a joy and a failure into a triumph?

As to the subjects of union prayer-meetings, they will be the great themes of our common Christianity.

Few prayer-meetings, even in the most sectarian churches, deal with doctrinal differences. If at any time the advocates of a peculiar doctrine or practise wished to confer about it, nothing would hinder their doing so.

But the great themes that have given rise to great differences, such a theme as baptism?

Brothers! here is a sacred rite established by our revered Savior, consecrated by His example and enforced by His command; and shall we doubt that His acknowledged followers could come together, in His presence, and discuss it peacefully? How meanly would we think of Christians, and how slightly would we trust the unifying Spirit, ready to guide seekers into all truth! I believe that union prayer-meetings, convened to talk and pray about the great debated doctrines and practises of the Church, would speedily reunite the sundered members of our Lord's body.

Does any one object that such meetings would be too large, that the throngs would hinder free discussion and prevent the participation of the timid?

That would indeed be a novel complaint, and the churches might gladly suffer it for some time! We need not meet the blessed emergency till it arises; but if the mass prayer-meeting ever be-

comes unwieldy, it may be broken into groups, neighborhood gatherings, cottage prayer-meetings, always, however, reassembling often for the inspiration of the host.

"But what if our prayer-meetings are already successful?" some one asks.

Then, all the more, you are your brother's keeper. Are the prayer-meetings of the other churches successful? If you do not need their help, do not they need yours? But you do need their help. Not the most successful prayer-meeting in the world is as successful as it would be if united with some discouraged and unsuccessful meeting.

"But we held a union prayer-meeting once, and it was a dismal failure. Each church relied on the other to fill the seats, and those that came were awkward and constrained."

My wagon tire was broken, and the blacksmith laid the parted ends upon cold charcoal. Then he gave them one blow with his hammer. "Fie!" he said in disgust, "that tire can not be mended."

No sporadic trial will make union meetings a success. It needs time to grow wonted to the novel form,

time to become acquainted with one another. It needs faith in the endeavor, loyalty to it, an eager desire for its success.

The world has not forgot the union prayer-meetings of the Woman's Crusade for the overthrow of the saloon, the most pathetic and eloquent event of modern times. The world will not forget the union prayer-meetings in Australia that preceded the recent Pentecost of the Island Continent. There was a meeting together veritably in His name, in His spirit; and verily He was in the midst.

Would it not please Christ if next Wednesday evening that meager Methodist handful of praying disciples should say, "Two blocks distant, in the Presbyterian church, is another discouraged little company. Let us carry our one coal to their one coal, that the two may make a blaze." And if on the way they should meet the dozen or two from the Baptist church, coming around the corner on the same errand. And if, arriving at the Presbyterian church, the two bodies should find their Calvinist brethren sallying forth to meet them. Would they not all, like Paul at the market of Appius, thank God and take courage? And would not Christ be happy in the midst of them?

Oh, lovers of the Lord! you whose whole hearts go out in longing to do something for Him, in return for His priceless love and sacrifice, this is one thing to do, so easy, so blessed, so grateful to Him! Shall we not bring it about, in glad allegiance to His will, in ready acknowledgment of His wisdom, in late but joyous response to His prayer,

That they all
may be
one.

XIV

Union Bible Schools

ONE of the most patent paradoxes of sectarianism is this, that, tho each sect is sure it is founded upon the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, the sects can not meet together to study this one Book.

Where a community should have a single strong, enthusiastic Bible school, you will find four or five dismal nonentities. In each, the weekly problem is, Where to find teachers? and the annual problem, Where to find a superintendent? In each, the numbers are small, and chiefly children. The singing is lifeless. The finances are at low ebb. There is no teachers' meeting. There is no suitable schoolroom or sets of rooms. The library is inadequate. The general note is discouragement.

Again I shall meet with the astonished and indignant denial of those that know their own vigorous, crowded Bible school, and do not know the average conditions of our over-churched communities; but no one will need to look far from home to find my picture true.

The remedy, and the only remedy, is the healing of the divisions in the body of Christ, so that all Christians can meet as brothers to study this message of their common Father.

One of the chief gains would be in the matter of teachers. A teacher is born and not made, and good teachers are nearly as rare as good poets. Certainly a village does not usually contain more than enough to supply a single school.

"I have tried to teach, but it isn't *in* me," is a common and true confession. Have you ever climbed a mountain with a friend that knew the way scarcely better than yourself? What slow work it is! What anxious search for landmarks! What dogged plodding! What uncertainty and half-distrust! You do not dare make detours. You do not know how to avoid the swampy spots. You take long ways instead of short cuts. You miss the springs. You miss the viewpoints. You reach the summit, if you reach it at all, with time for only a hasty glance around the horizon before the descending sun warns you to begin the downward course. Ah, it is stupid work, climbing a mountain with an amateur!

But with a professional guide it is quite a different matter! How confidently he strides ahead, with that space-

devouring, slow swing of his, all your luggage resting lightly on his broad back! He prepares a highway before you, here slashing off with his hatchet a projecting limb, now giving you a push up a steep rock, and now leading you comfortably around a sharp-toothed thicket. You stretch yourselves content by the springs. Through surprising vistas of green he points out the distant peaks. He takes you aside to promontories from which great valleys yawn into sudden view. Long before noon you stand victorious on the mountain top, with two full hours, if you choose, in which to enjoy your triumph. That is climbing with a guide.

Now Bible study is an ascending of great peaks, range after range of them. It is muddled work indeed unless the guide knows his business.

Bible schools, without home study and with only a poor half-hour a week for teaching, present problems compared with which those of secular schools are child's play. They need teachers superior in power and training to those of secular schools. But in a village whose secular schools employ six teachers you will find six churches, each trying to find twelve competent teachers for its Sunday-school, or seventy-two in all! In a union Bible school, taught by the best teachers from all the churches, the lack

of good teachers would still be severe; but as it is——!

Some may object that in a union school the classes would be too large. If there are really good teachers that can handle successfully only six scholars, six may be made their limit in a union school as in a sectarian one; but for most good teachers the ordinary Sunday-school class is far too small. To a secular teacher is assigned a roomful, forty or more at a time; why not to a Bible teacher?

Yet further, consider the advantage of union schools in the matter of teacher-training. The Sunday-school world is thoroughly awake to the fact that it can not do the best work, even with gifted and devout teachers, without systematic and persistent training in teachers' meetings and normal classes.

Now, if good teachers are rare, teacher-trainers are rarer still. An ordinary village is indeed fortunate if it contains a single person thoroughly capable of training teachers. To expect each of the six or twelve churches of a village to contain such a person is the height of absurdity.

That, as all Sunday-school workers understand, is why there are so few teachers' meetings and normal classes,

because there is no one to conduct them. When a really helpful leader is found, the Sunday-school teachers flock eagerly to sit at his feet. To confine his labors to a single church is the acme of wasteful mismanagement.

Indeed, this has been felt, and, with the exception of young people's societies, no part of our church life has advanced so far in practical union as our Sunday-schools. In some portions of the country the skilful normal teacher of the Bible goes from town to town, and fills as many week-nights as he will with enthusiastic union meetings of teachers, glad to pay him for his aid in their unsalaried work. Sometimes, when the scholars as well as the teachers are admitted, these classes win a steady, delighted attendance of hundreds and even thousands.

And this point is to be noted with care: no doctrinal dispute, no sectarian wrangling, ever mars these union meetings. They are conducted by men of most positive convictions. The most successful of all these leaders holds with ardor some peculiar tenets in which few of his hearers sympathize. And yet only the utmost harmony marks all the gatherings. A more impressive illustration of the entire feasibility of Church union it would be impossible to furnish.

"But, of course," it will be urged, "in these union classes disputed points of doctrine are not studied." Yes, they are studied, but not in a disputatious way. The time is happily past when Christians would find it impossible to sit down peacefully together and review the Bible passages bearing on election or foreordination or baptism or church-membership or pastoral ordination. The Christians present will differ in their interpretations still, but they will not cease to love one another.

But, as a matter of fact, how often does the subject of baptism come up even in a Baptist Sunday-school? Certainly not as often as it should. I was nurtured in a Presbyterian school, and do not recall a single discussion of election or foreordination. Neither was the presbyterial form of church government once explained, nor were its advantages over the congregational and episcopal forms once pointed out. These mooted points of doctrine and polity form no appreciable portion of Sunday-school instruction in our sectarian schools, and no fear of confusion regarding them need prevent the formation of union schools.

"But these things should be taught," some one objects. "Our children," urges one, "should be grounded in the blessed truth of election." "Our

children," urges another, "should be instructed in its falsity." "Our children," say both, "should not be exposed to the teaching of all sorts of untruth and nonsense."

To which it may be replied that very few parents really know what their children are taught in the Sunday-school, and would often be surprised if they did know; that the carefully selected teachers of a union school could be instructed not to touch on debatable ground and could be trusted to obey their instructions: and that if, say twice a year, the union school broke up into denominational divisions for the study on two Sabbaths of denominational tenets, the scholars would receive more of such instruction than they are receiving now.

Another gain from union Bible schools is the enthusiasm that comes from numbers. Children are readily impressed by crowds and gain inspiration from them. Christianity becomes in their thought a mighty, conquering force, quite other than the weak, inefficient, dreary affair exemplified by the average school.

Does any one fear that these large union schools would be too bulky to manage? On the contrary, it is the great schools, such as Mr. Wanamaker's, that

are the most orderly and the most easily controlled.

And the controlling agents, the officers, of a union school would be more efficient than the average, because they would be the pick of the average. Few have the organizing ability, the personal force, the original and presiding mind, necessary for a good Sunday-school superintendent. If we can find one such person to direct our public schools, we are pleased; but we expect to find a dozen for our churches. On the contrary, the average village would do well to provide from all its churches a single capable superintendent of a union Bible school, and maintain the necessary succession.

And so with all the outfit of a union school. It would give the scholars not only the best teachers and the best superintendent, but the best available secretary, treasurer, chorister, librarian. An inspiring choir could be organized, perhaps an orchestra. You could have an ideal library. The primary department would shine. The adult class would actually fill its room. You could form an inspiring class for young men. You could afford a stereopticon. There would be among you an artist for blackboard work, and some one skilled in giving object talks. There is no end to the possibilities of combined forces.

As to collections? There will be no trouble with those for the school expenses; and as for missionary gifts, divide the contributions among the denominations in a ratio agreed upon, or let the members of different denominations designate their gifts for their respective boards by envelopes of different colors.

As to lesson helps? There is no especial gain from uniformity, and each might have those published by his own denomination if he preferred.

As to courses of study? Sometimes the Episcopalians and Lutherans might yield their preference to follow the course of the Church year, and sometimes the other denominations might profitably try their plan. It is the one Bible that is studied in all courses, and the enormous advantage of union schools is worth the occasional sacrifice of preference.

As to a Sunday-school room? Could any place be found large enough for a union school?

In the good time coming, when we shall have "the Church of Christ in Kalamazoo," there will be entire church buildings blessedly vacated for the sole use of the Bible school. They will be remodeled, floors will be inserted, abundant classrooms will be made, libraries, officers' rooms, committee-rooms, rooms

for apparatus, assembly-rooms. Fine times are coming for the Bible schools!

But until they come? If the union school outgrows the accomodations of any church, it must be divided, as many secular schools divide, certain departments going to one church and other departments to a second church. Even then, occasional general assemblies might be held, when the entire school could see itself, and maintain the consciousness of the host.

The formation of these union Bible schools will be for many communities their first practical step toward vital Church union. The experiences of union schools on our frontier, where for many decades such schools have inaugurated organized Christianity, shows us how feasible will be the undertaking, and how richly God will bless it. What but His full blessing could we expect? For the Bible is one, as He is one. It is His one manual for His one army, His one letter to His one Church. The united study of it will go happily far toward fulfilling Christ's longing,

That they all
may be
one.

XV

Union Training-Schools

NO task now before the churches is so easy, grateful, and necessary as the duty of leading young people along the ways of religious cooperation and unity.

It is especially necessary because no reform is permanent ever until it seizes on the imagination and affection of the young; but if young men and young women take it up, with their fresh ardor blessedly blind to bugaboos, and with their determination unwitting of failures, its future is assured.

It is especially grateful and easy because the young are not tied by tradition or bound by the shackles of custom. Routine has not become their home. They like to try new methods. They are enterprising and daring in their application of principles. They delight in the impossible, and so they are gloriously Christian.

For the sake of the young, in the sphere of religion as so nobly in the secular sphere, the old should be glad to make

sacrifices. It should be easier for the old to give up their wonted forms, the familiar names and ways of doing things, if thereby they may build up for the young a stronger and truer Church.

Never shall I forget how, when I removed from West to East to enter my present work, my blessed mother gladly came with me, uprooting precious associations and memories, establishing for me, amid scenes sadly strange to her, the dear home that her last days have consecrated. Such devotion will not be lacking in the Church when the young move East toward the sunrise of Christian union.

And the new methods, so far as Church union renders new methods necessary, will soon grow sacred. Not many years of holy service are needed to give sanctity to anything. To those that have reared its rough walls, have communed in it, worshiped in it, and in it given their children to the Lord, a frontier church is as sacred as Westminster Abbey. It is the heart that anoints, and not the calendar.

Young people need the enthusiasm of numbers, appreciate it, and use it well. They are gregarious. They pro-

gress in one another's growth, climb on one another's shoulders.

Young people need the inspiration of ideals. An unideal condition frets them, they are impatient with it. They do not see, and often rightly they do not see, why men should endure it.

Young people easily learn to know and love one another. Their affections are pliant and magnetic. Pedantries, formalities, prejudices, do not hamper them.

All that are familiar with the great interdenominational religious work among young people that began with the founding of Christian Endeavor societies in 1881, understand most vividly how easily Church union could be inaugurated, with what absence of friction, with what harmony of impulse, with what approval of conscience. Christian Endeavor conventions and the work of Christian Endeavor unions have proved themselves the efficient solvent of the sects. There the young people and their sympathizing pastors and older friends forget that they are Baptists and Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists and Lutherans, and so on, and know themselves and their brothers only as followers of the same precious Redeemer. They hold their distinctive views as te-

naciously and faithfully as ever, but they also hold one another's hands. In other words, they have strangely found it possible simultaneously to follow Conscience and Christ!

Consistently, and honestly, of course, our brothers that believe in sects—or rather each in his own sect—have founded sectarian young people's societies. I am not blaming them; if I held their views, I should have done just what they did: I am blaming their views. They have accomplished nothing with their young people that they could not have accomplished within the interdenominational movement, nothing that other churches have not accomplished within that movement; but they have kept them from contact with other young people, from the contagion of fellowship, the grasp of the union ideal.

I deprecate this, but no more severely than many in those denominations deprecate it. The fairest promise of vital Church union since Pentecost has been checked, but not permanently. I do not despair of seeing with my own eyes a united young people's society that shall prove the beginning of a united Church. Yet who can tell in what way or by what instrumentality the Holy Spirit may move upon the hearts of men? It is the duty of those that love His will to keep wide open all avenues to His approach.

Let us, therefore, lead our young Christians closer together! It is so easy to bring it about "that *they* all may be one"!

And, without regard at first to the wider problem of denominational organization, let us unite the young locally in these training-schools. Union here is even more necessary and useful than with the Bible schools, because the young people's societies are always smaller, and because they are usually left without the guidance and support of the old and experienced workers.

These societies are training-schools. They afford the only drill we are giving the young in Christian expression, in testimony, in Biblical exhortation and "edifying," in "prophesying," in giving, in missions, in executive work, in the conduct of meetings, the management of committees, in the discipline of others, in evangelism.

Few, indeed, in any church are able leaders of the young along the lines of these activities. It is not easy work; even the well-trained pastor (seldom trained, however, by his seminary for this one task!) often has failures here to confess. How unwise it is not to focus on the problem the best leaders of the young in all the community!

Here in the Methodist church is a most enthusiastic and well-informed student of missions, most skilful also in imparting to others his enthusiasm and his knowledge. Were the young people's societies united, he could conduct the mission study of all. What a strategical error not thus to utilize him!

Here in the Baptist church is a young man whom God has anointed to be an evangelist. He has led some souls to Christ, and he has the power of inspiring others with his own evangelistic zeal. Why should he not be doing that great work in a united young people's society? What a blunder not to use him thus!

Among the young Presbyterians there is a band of generous givers. They are true stewards of the Lord's bounty, and the grace of stewardship is blessedly contagious from association with them. Why should not that contagion spread through a united young people's society? What a gain for the churches and the young people if it should!

And the prayer-meetings! If we grant the wisdom of union prayer-meetings for their elders, surely we must see them to be wise for the young people. My heart aches when I think in how many communities, Sunday after Sunday, young men and women, boys and girls, straggle into their separated churches,

and heroically strive with their few voices to fill the echoing spaces, with their brief and stammering sentences to fill the hour, and with their paltry numbers to fill out the full measure of enthusiasm for which they long.

Not one of them, probably, but has tasted something better. Not one of them but has risen early, some convention morning, and made his eager way to a sunrise prayer-meeting. They have crowded in, Methodist and Friends, Lutherans and Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Brethren, Disciples and Congregationalists, and they have filled every seat. With what exultation rise the songs! How swift and unforced are the testimonies! How eager are the prayers! How short is the time! And as the happy company of united Christians stream from the doorways, lo! the Sun has risen upon them.

Experiences such as these might be the weekly joy of all young disciples. They are ready for them; dimly and uncertainly they are longing for them; it is the Church's duty to bestow the opportunity.

Perplexities of detail are here even less than in the case of the Sunday-school. Union prayer-meeting topics are all ready, used for years in all nations by more than eighty different de-

nominations. Union mission-study textbooks are all ready, the product of happy cooperation among the denominations. As for the gifts, after the society expenses are paid, they may be divided in an agreed ratio among the mission boards of the denominations represented, or each young Christian may make a separate contribution designated for his own boards. As for the meeting-place, if the society outgrows it, it may divide, geographically and not sectarianly, holding occasional reunions in some church; or, they may all meet for the opening and closing exercises in the main auditorium of the church, separating into different rooms for the prayer and testimony of all.

These union services might well be approached gradually. Begin with one or two meetings, under the best auspices possible, and gain an appetite for more. Send fraternal delegates weekly among the societies, that they may carry kindly messages back and forth, and reports of one another's work. Knit the societies together by common effort of some sort, such as a union mission-study class, or a union class for the study of the Bible or of civics. Hold union socials, and no other, for a year, and be systematic and persistent in your purpose to know one another. Then when you come together finally it will be to remain together.

The leaders in all this must be the pastors, or it will not be done at all. How much more two pastors, with their united energy and wisdom, might do for two societies united than ever each could do for his own society separated! Are there no ministers that can work together, two and two, after Christ's precept? Are there no Paul-and-Silas possibilities among modern preachers of the Gospel? I think there are many, tho sadly as yet unrealized.

And how fruitfully and easily four or five ministers might lead a union society of young people, each according to his talents and liking! One might inspire their missionary studying and giving, one might help the leaders of the prayer-meetings, one might oversee the music, another the socials, another the systematic Bible study; and they might shift and vary and interchange these labors so that each would give his best and give it most easily.

What a spectacle to the young would be such unselfish devotion of their pastors! What an object-lesson in co-operation! And to the pastors themselves what a blessed communion of service! And to our Lord himself what a delight!

Oh, let us not forget that it was He who commanded Peter "Feed my sheep," and did not omit to add, "Feed

my lambs," and surely would not have the young of His flock omitted from any of the joys of the fold, but rather would have those joys begin with them,—He it was that, over and over in the most solemn hour with His disciples, urged the prayer

That they all may be one.

XVI

Union Pastorates

YES; are there no Paul and Silas among our modern apostles? Nay, rather, are there no Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke and Jude and John Mark and Barnabas and Apollos? Are there none that are willing to bury pride and prejudice, and in love, humility, and perfect zeal go forth, two and two, four and four, ten and ten, for the saving of men and the winning of the world? I believe that there are many such.

Why is it that in business the successes of the single tradesman are so few and the successes of the commercial company so many? What is the value of a business partnership? It means a massing of resources. A larger store can be bought, a larger advertisement put in the paper, more clerks hired, more goods purchased and at a smaller price. It means a massing of intelligence. Competition is strenuous. Business interests are complicated. Each line of action calls for and fully occupies a peculiar talent. One man is good at buying, another at selling. One is a master advertiser, another is a shrewd

investor. One can select clerks well, another can keep books, another can entertain the leading customers, and wisely gage their credit. It means also, and at the best, a massing of courage. Each partner contributes confidence, and that is often more than coin or counsel. They support one another, and no adverse gale can overthrow them.

There is no reason of all these that does not apply to union pastorates. Our present system of separate pastorates involves an enormous waste, often of money, always of time and strength and courage. It is a waste that would not for a moment be tolerated in the business world.

In the village of Bunkerville there are five churches of five sects. Their vital interests are one, as every Christian in the village would admit. The five ministers are fighting the same devil, preaching the same salvation, ambassadors of the same Christ. They have far more in common than the average set of business partners. And yet they carry on five isolated enterprises.

One church would easily hold the five congregations, yet they maintain five churches, with heat and light and repairs and janitors and insurance and

carpets and cushions and subscription papers and church fairs.

One sermon would suffice for the united congregation in the morning and one in the evening, but they prepare ten. Each minister might preach one-fifth as often and five times as well. Or, during four-fifths of the time, each preacher might be out in the highways and hedges, compelling them to come in —preaching in country schoolhouses, in barns, in the market-place, in the park, in the jail, wherever his Master would preach. And after four Sundays of such work, how he would glorify the home pulpit on the fifth Sunday! how he would make the sermons shine!

With the fivefold congregation would come quite a fivefold inspiration to the preacher. Quarter-filled pews give no quarter to the sermons. Nothing is so eloquent as a multitude of human faces, and nothing is more productive of eloquence. It was the thronged church quite as much as the great emergency that made Chrysostom. Those faces press upon the preacher in his study and surround him as he walks, uplifting all his thoughts upon insistent waves of appeal. To compel each minister in Bunkerville to preach to only one-fifth of the possible congregation is to lower by four-fifths the power of the Bunkerville pulpit.

Moreover, all preachers, even the greatest, are limited in their range of themes. To each, certain aspects of truth make a powerful appeal, but not others. Each, preaching at least one hundred sermons a year, is at his best not one-fourth of the time, because not one-fourth of the time is he a prophet, delivering the word God has given to him. God's word is spoken always, but as the Athenian actor mouthed the words of Æschylus, through an impassive mask. He has not become his message.

If those five preachers, therefore, would unite their sundered pastorates, Bunkerville would have five times the chance at a completed Word of God, all forms and phases of truth. One would preach as a poet, one as a scholar, one as a practical man of affairs, one as a seer, one as a saint.

The great problem of every preacher is to satisfy his congregation; not in any gross sense, but to meet fully the infinitely complex needs of the complex company before him. No one man, be it Spurgeon himself, is adequate for that task in a congregation of fifty. When the congregation in Bunkerville becomes five hundred, and the five ministers focus their five characters upon the one audience, the church will have five times the chance at satisfaction with its preaching.

And if any one objects that Christ satisfies all men and that the true preacher is only holding forth Christ, while the Holy Spirit applies the truth to the heart of each listener, let us remember what we continually observe that not even the minister most efficient in humility can strip his message of human clogs and speak as never man spake. Always the mouthpiece colors the truth, and of two men equally the mouthpieces of the Spirit, one may help us profoundly and another never a whit.

But every year increases the work of the minister outside the pulpit, and, thus far, rightly so. Here, too, the union pastorate proves gloriously wise.

Not all ministers ought to preach, as many a church and many a would-be preacher have discovered to their grief and dismay. This foolish system by which every church requires from one man all the "diversities of gifts" that Paul declared do not exist in one man and that did not exist in Paul himself, insisting that he be prophet and teacher and evangelist and pastor and speaker in tongues, that he be financier and architect and musician and lecturer and after-dinner orator, that he be good at chalk-talks and object-lessons and out-door speaking, that he call on the sick and the poor and the fashionable, that

he conduct charities and young people's societies and mission-study classes and prayer-meetings and marriages and funerals, that he shine at conventions and conferences and ordinations and in the village improvement society and at the high-school commencement and the Sunday-school concert, that he write articles and a book and give stereopticon lectures, that he keep posted on literature and science and current events and do not forget his Hebrew—this foolish system, I say, that imposes on every minister a variety of burdens that no other profession or trade would dream of assuming, is responsible for many a broken heart and crushed life. Not even Paul could be all things to all men after this encyclopedic fashion, and few men are Pauls.

No; not all ministers should preach, nor should all preachers be pastors, nor should all prophets be evangelists. Every modern institution except the Church has recognized the need of the specialist. The college does not want its Greek professor to dabble in mathematics, the law looks askance on judges that write poetry, the merchant prefers an advertising manager that is not devoted to the flute. The ideal Church, when our religion becomes businesslike, will demand specialists for its ministers, and not men of the smattering mind.

This is possible only with union pastorates. In such a combination, one would be the young folk's minister, a specialist in the work of the Bible-school and the training-school, a leader in the social life of the young, in their intellectual and spiritual life. It would matter little whether he preached or not. Another would be the pastor of the flock; he would carry healthful cheer to sick-beds, and ever-glowing youth to the aged, and the joy of the Lord to mourners, and guidance to the perplexed, and warning to those that near the precipice. It would matter little whether he preached or not. For another would be the prophet. He would be much alone with God. He would have time for mountains. He would range libraries. He would delve deep in the Book. He dare not be isolated from men, but he would not be chained to them. He would preach, and it would matter little how many calls he made. Nor would one be above another, for all would be ambassadors of Christ, speaking His word and doing His will.

Thus union pastorates would give a chance for ministerial specialties, the thorough development of ministerial likings and powers. One would be a student of missions, able to teach the inspiring history of Church extension, able to promote missionary giving and going, and to make the Church of Christ in

Bunkerville a vital part of the Church of Christ Universal. One would become a student of the slums, the poor, the improvident, the criminal, and would make the Church of Christ a genuine leaven in Bunkerville. One would develop the people in the great doctrines of Christ; one would instruct in the principles and practise of temperance, one would open the treasures of the Word.

All the ministers, of course, would love and study and constantly use the Bible; but not all would be skilled teachers. All would love missions, but not all would be widely informed regarding missions. All would be firmly based on the great doctrines, but not all would be able to make others doctrinal enthusiasts. And tho many of these abilities, or even all of them, existed in one man, he would be able to work along one line at a time, with fulness of efficiency and satisfaction.

Some will deny that ministers would be able thus to divide the work among themselves, thus to recognize their own limitations and special abilities, thus without friction or selfish and ambitious competition to develop the church each along the line of his own talents. "They would all want to be in the pulpit at once," the scoffer will say. "Each would claim for his specialties more time, money, and interest than they should

have; there would be heart-burning, strife, disgraceful ruptures."

In a business house one partner buys the silks and another the cottons while a third superintends the advertising, each using his own special knowledge for the good of the firm and the promotion of the business. Will one insist upon buying too much cotton? Will the second desire to display silks to the disadvantage of other goods? Will the third want all the firm's surplus for advertising? Is it true that business men can combine for common ends, but ministers can not combine for the furthering of the King's business?

Ministers should love one another more than men of other callings. They should set the churches a great and constant example of humility, of preferring one another, of fruitful cooperation. I believe that they will.

Church union, thus, will not mean fewer ministers than now, tho there will be fewer churches. It will mean, in the end and speedily, more ministers than now, for there will be more Christians to be served and led. Also it will mean better ministers, for able young men will be attracted to the ministry more than now, seeing in it broad and adequate scope for their abilities.

Best of all, and most to be enjoyed by the ministers of Christ's united Church, will be the support and comfort that these partners in the most glorious of enterprises will give one another. They will be frank. They will give one another the crystalline criticism for which all true workers long and which they too seldom receive. They will spur one another to activity, resolve one another's perplexities, amend one another's faults, supply one another's deficiencies. Especially they will praise one another's excellencies, comfort one another's sorrows, be to one another unfailing reservoirs of strength and cheer and inspiration. As a group of college chums, as the members of a football team, as a military company in a campaign, by toiling together and perchance fighting a common foe, come to have a romantic affection for one another, so these associated officers in Christ's army. The longer they work together, the better will they work together, becoming acquainted with one another's peculiarities, familiar with one another's methods, lovers of one another's excellencies, the efficient supplements and complements of one another.

And as they get closer to one another, must they not draw ever closer to Christ, who dwells in them all? Their association in labor will associate Him with their labors. Their strengthening

of one another will knit them to His strength, their love of one another will bind them to His love. The union of Christ's under-shepherds will assure their union with Him whose unutterable longing for them, now as always, is

That they all may be one.

XVII

Church Union and Church Extension

WHAT if Paul had gone to Rome with one Gospel, and had established there one denomination? What if Luke had taken another Gospel, and founded a different denomination? And Timothy a third, and Titus a fourth, and Silas and Barnabas and Apollos and John Mark and the rest had founded each his own denomination at Rome?

There were differences of opinion among the early Christians, as we know, sufficient to warrant a dozen modern sects. They were blessedly crushed down and pressed together by persecution.

But if this had not been so; if individuality had run riot; if there had been no catacombs in whose narrow, dark confines the blood of the martyrs might become the germinating seed of the Church; if men had replaced Christ at Rome, and they had said, "I of Paul" and "I of Apollos" and "I of Luke"

and "I of John," just as we now say "I of Wesley" and "I of Calvin" and "I of Luther" and "I of Swedenborg"; if thus, instead of Christ's one body lifted on the cross, there had been a dozen fragments of His body lifted on twelve crosses, would the Church ever have conquered in that sign?

To be sure, Rome had many sects, followers of many idolatries, devotees of many philosophies, dupes of many charlatans, fools of many infidelities. But Christ conquered because He did *not* have.

When the sin of sectarianism in the missionary operations of the Church is urged, it is indeed unworthy of Christians to advance the oft-heard plea that the multitude of our denominations does little, if any, harm because heathen also are religiously divided; they are used to it; they have still more sects than we have.

To be sure they have, with their million gods! But our God is one.

We are aping the monstrous folly of polytheism. We are carrying to the heathen, not many gods, perhaps, but many images of one God—that is, many idols.

What an argument our missionaries miss! Of what a plea are they deprived by our sectarian divisions!

They are compelled at best to say, "Yes, the Christians down at Ongole are Baptists. They do not hold the true doctrine in all respects, but they are Christians in spite of it. Yes, the Christians up at Furrukabad are Presbyterians. Their belief is defective, but we consider them Christians. Yes, the Christians over in Guntur call themselves Lutherans. They are imperfect, but we admit them to be Christians. You must distinguish between the General Council Lutherans and the General Synod Lutherans near by. They are quite different. How? I can not explain it; wait till you have become more of a Christian, Krishnu. And the Free Baptists near Calcutta? Oh yes; they are quite different from the Ongole Baptists; they are another Church. And the United Presbyterians at Sialkot? And the Reformed Presbyterians General Synod at Roorkee? Certainly; both are different from the Furrukabad Presbyterians and from each other, and there are other kinds of Presbyterians, and many other Christian Churches. But my own denomination is the only one you should join, because it is the only one that is altogether right. How many are there of us? About one hundred thousand; but we are growing,

Krishnu, we are growing, and don't you want to help Perfect Truth to grow?"

If the missionary goes on to say, "We are all one, Krishnu, one at heart, in spite of our divisions into sects," Krishnu understands perfectly well. He knows how the sects of Hinduism are one at heart. He is at home in the miserable matter.

Ah, could our missionaries go to the perplexed followers of Shinto or Buddha or the myriad gods of India, and summon them from their clash of creeds, their tangle of allegiances, to a Christianity as simple, clear, and whole as our Lord left it! Could it only be said to Krishnu: "My brother, God is one. He has made of one blood all nations of men. He has sent His only Son to make one sacrifice for the sins of all. In love to Him all His millions of followers upon the earth are so united that, tho our opinions manfully vary, we work together and worship together and together hold out to dying men the one Bread of Life. We summon you to Christ. Here is the one Book that tells you of Him. As you read it, differing opinions will arise with you as with us, for this religion pierces into hidden mysteries, where now we see darkly; but do not allow these differing opinions to disturb your union with one another and with Christ, even as we have not. Form

your own Church of Christ in Ongole and in India, as we have formed the Church of Christ in Bunkerville and in America, and let it all be one Church as it is all one Christ."

To some such appeal the missionaries have been driven, in many fields, so that nowhere has Church union so advanced as in heathen lands. The enormous pressure of opposing forces has driven Christians together in Kyoto as of old in Rome. In Japan, in Korea, and in Brazil there are conspicuous examples of this, and denominations are one in those countries that at home are leagues apart. It is a sort of veneer laid by the missionaries over the patched and pieced-out carpentry of the sects! If any one thinks that Church union is not practicable, let him study missions in Japan.

On the home mission field also the pressure of the need often forms union churches. In the God-forgetting towns of the frontier, in the mining camps of Alaska, among the loggers of Michigan and Canada, the few earnest Christians are compelled to join hands or be utterly submerged by the great tide of worldliness and sin. In the little apostolic churches that spring up there is no question of sect, but of life. "If we do not hang together, we shall all hang separately." There is no church building.

It is, very literally, "the church in the house of" Jones or Smith. They are grateful for a word from any traveling preacher, and do not ask or note the fashion of his theological waistcoat. As they struggle, back to back, against bitter antagonists, a wonderful love for one another grows among those primitive Christians, and a wonderful love for their one Leader.

But as the camp becomes the village, in rush the sects. A good "location" is scented. The union Church is assiduously picked apart into its original straggling elements. First one sect is drawn aside, and two weak churches are battling for life. Further disintegration rapidly follows, until the town is dotted with almost as many churches as saloons; but the saloons are a unit.

Ah, when will the Church of Christ, one and wise, extend itself as our national government extends itself into unoccupied territory! Come, let us set up two post-offices in Newtown, that competition may increase the trade in postage stamps! Or, Come, let us have a Democratic post-office, and a Republican post-office, and a Prohibition post-office, and a Populist post-office, and a Socialist post-office! But no; we may not divide postage-stamps, tho we may divide Christ.

When will the churches of Christ, one and wise, focus their forces on strategic points, instead of dividing the force already gathered there? When will the Church of Christ in America say: "Down in Donna Ana County, Arizona, is the settlement of Mesquite. Let us lay hands on Philip Andros, and send him to establish the Church of Christ in Mesquite." And Philip Andros will go down to Mesquite backed by the money and prayers of the Church of Christ in America. When will the Church of Christ in America say, "Our medical college in Tai-ting, province of Kwei Chau, needs a head nurse. Let us lay hands on Florence Oriole, and send her forth to the hospital wards of Tai-ting." And Florence Oriole will go, backed by the money and prayers of the Church of Christ in America.

Oh, the inspiration we are losing, for our missionaries and ourselves, as we fail of this united advance! What courage it would give us all, those that go and those that stay, if the churches of Christ were the Church of Christ! A great army was marching in small detachments through a wilderness. Each little band was struggling along, disheartened, amid the tangled underbrush. Each felt itself almost alone, deserted. Of a sudden, simultaneously, the detachments broke out upon a wide, clear plain, their bands playing, their banners flying;

and as each saw the other, and the consciousness of their invincible numbers and power rushed upon them, the entire army burst into cheers and songs of triumph. So will it be, O my brothers, when our leaders take the churches of Christ out of the thickets of sectarianism!

I have boasted, thoughtlessly, of our multitudinous missionary societies — 537 for foreign lands alone, not counting the auxiliary women's boards. But I shall boast no longer of our weakness. Why, when I go to Persia, I know that I carry with me, for my defense and support, the army and navy, the Congress and President, the overflowing treasury and the united millions of my countrymen. I, insignificant I, am an embodiment in Persia of the United States. That is what the Church of Christ should do for its missionaries. But suppose this were not so. Suppose that only the power of Massachusetts were back of me; and not that, either, but the power of Middlesex County; nor that, either, but only my little village of Auburndale to back me against the kingdom of Persia. That would be what our churches are doing for their missionaries.

I am not interested here in the matter of money. Perhaps the union of the churches might introduce economies into the administration of missions, tho there

seems hardly room for more economy than is now practised there. Perhaps we could get along with fewer missionary secretaries, tho I doubt it, the field is so vast and intricate. And, in any event, if not for administration, we should need them all, and more, for inspiration, for tours among the churches, arousing and organizing the missionary sentiment as Paul did.

It is said that the multiplication of missionary boards means the increase of missionary gifts, that 537 foreign missionary societies struggling against 537 deficits would raise—perhaps not 537 times as much money as a united society, but vastly more than one society would raise. And this is said in the face of the fact that, after this century of divided effort, the mission boards are continually in straits, and the average annual gift for missions of the Protestant Christian is less than forty cents! One would think it time at least to try a new method.

But no; motive wins money. The grander the motive animating the churches, the more generous and constant will be their missionary giving. Sectarian propagandizing is an ignoble motive, and is always backed by a meager treasury. The denominations that are most sectarian in spirit, whether radical or conservative, are the poorest supporters of missions. The appeals that open

men's hearts and purses and tap unlimited streams of revenue are the simple, Christlike appeals to pity, and patriotism, and unselfish devotion to the good of the world. A billion dollars will be spent for the freedom of the slaves; how much would be spent to conserve a constitutional theory? We gladly give the President a credit of fifty million dollars to wage war for Cuban liberty; how much would we have given him to procure Cuban annexation? Were the Church of Christ, one united body of Christ, to summon us in the one Name for a death-or-life struggle against the Kingdom of Satan, who doubts the power of that mighty appeal to win all needed money and men?

"But," some well-informed person will say, "how could all missions be harmoniously operated when, as it is, the separate boards are disturbed by so many jealousies and antagonisms, even the home and foreign boards of the same denomination quarreling, and the board at work among the Mormons suspicious of the board at work among the Indians?"

Well, well! What if the United States had one hundred Departments of War, each operating over the entire country and the world, at liberty to establish rival forts in the same township, to send rival recruiting agents into the

same village? What but suspicions, jealousies, and antagonisms could you expect among those hundred secretaries of war and their department officers? Precisely that is what we are doing in our warfare against the devil!

There are jealousies, to be sure, in our national Department of War, for men are human, and we can not expect the love of the Prince of Peace to animate a machine for worldly warfare; but would there not be infinitely more wrangling among one hundred Departments of War?

Still again the objectors urge an argument: "Even the missions of a single denomination present complexities and endless important details of men and measures. It is proverbial how ignorant is the average Christian of the missions of his own denomination: how could he ever grasp the missions of a United Church of Christ?"

How can a citizen of Ohio ever grasp the affairs of the United States? Therefore let him confine his knowledge, interest, and attention to Greene County, or, at most, to the Buckeye State.

Is it not plain that patriotism is dependent upon a love for all the States, and enough knowledge of them to be basis for love? Is there other confidence for our country except when Maine cares

for California and Minnesota has regard for Florida? And can any one be a patriot for the Kingdom of Heaven if he knows only what his little corner of it is doing?

I am ashamed for Christianity when I see the weazened pamphlets and pinched periodicals in which the sects chronicle each its own little missionary advance or retreat, while secularities have their scores of corpulent magazines, elegant in appearance, employing the best artists and authors, winning and deserving the eager interest of the multitude. A United Church of Christ would parallel them and surpass them with fascinating and resourceful missionary magazines.

I am ashamed for Christianity when I see the "missionary concerts" of Bunkerville. *Those* missionary "concerts," forsooth, in which there is no concerted action, a handful of Methodists meeting to pray about Methodist missions, quite ignorant of the Presbyterians next door, and those Presbyterians, another handful, praying for Presbyterian missions, equally ignorant of the Methodists! The Church of Christ in Bunkerville will hold genuine missionary "concerts" some day, worthily representing the world of Christ in its struggle against the world of evil.

If one would be convinced of the folly of sectarianism, let him study the missions of all the churches. If one would learn to know and love his brethren in Christ, let him discover what they have done for Christ, and in what spirit.

However intensely one may feel the errors of Roman Catholicism, let him read the history of Catholic missions in China and Korea, and he will never again condemn Romanists without qualification.

Who can read the stories of Carey and Judson and Boardman, of Jewett and Clough and Colman, of Ashmore and Bagby and Richards, the stories of the Telugus, the Karens, the Congo—who can read these and not come to admire and love the Baptists?

Who can learn about Newell and Agnew and Coan, about Goodell and Schauffler and Hamlin, about Bridgman and Parker and Logan, Armenian massacres, Boxer massacres, and Haystack prayer-meeting—who can learn about these, and not come to admire and love the Congregationalists?

Who can study the history of the Fijis, the villages of north India, the progress of Korea, who can study the lives of Taylor and Butler and Swain, of Thoburn and Collins and Hunt, of

Thomson and Coke and Cox—who can study these, and not come to admire and love the Methodists?

Who can know his Siam and Syria and Korea and Persia, who can read of Nevius and Good and Mackay, of Morrison and Forman and Lowrie, of Grant and Newton and Paton—who can know of these, and not come to admire and love the Presbyterians?

What a loss to all the denominations that they do not study the great story of the Moravians, the devotion of Zinzendorf, Stach, Dähne, Hartmann, Schmidt, and Dober, the work in Greenland, the West Indies, and the "Dead Man's Land" of South America!

If one is prejudiced against the Episcopal Church, what a revelation is James Chalmers, and Henry Martyn, and Reginald Heber, and Bishop French, and Selwyn, and Patteson, and Crowther, and Mackay, and Hannington—the story of New Zealand, of New Guinea, of Uganda, of Tinnevelli!

If one is ignorant of the Reformed Church in America, what a happy discovery is Chamberlain, the Scudders, Cantine, Zwemer, Stone, Abeel, Verbeck, Brown, the beginnings in Japan, the work in Arabia! What an introduction to the United Presbyterians is Egypt! And

such words might be written of all the long list of denominations. As I have studied their missions I have come to admire and love them all. They are worthy of better things, of greater triumphs; they are worthy each of the other; they are worthy of union.

But suppose that only the Army of the Ohio knew of Burnside, that only the Army of the Cumberland knew of Thomas, that only the Army of the Tennessee knew of Sherman, that only the Army of the Potomac knew of Meade. Suppose that the story of Fort Donelson had been confined to Tennessee, the story of Vicksburg to Mississippi. Victory was possible to the Union forces only as they *were* union forces, the heroes and triumphs of one army the heroes and triumphs of all. A tax upon the memory, this multiplicity of names and details? Ah, such taxes are more necessary for the support of a country than all other imposts combined!

Paton is Presbyterian of the Presbyterians, but in reading his matchless autobiography all sects are one. Chalmers was Episcopalian through and through, but his martyrdom united Christ's followers everywhere in a common sorrow and exultation. Judson was a Baptist, if there ever was one, but his career is the pride of all the churches.

Oh, all that love the Lord in Bunkerville should come together, to inspire one another with all that each can tell of Christian service in any field; and as Lutheran and Disciple and Friend, as High Churchman and Low Churchman, as Cumberland Presbyterian and Methodist Protestant and Free Baptist and all the rest heaped high their good news upon the glowing altar, not in boastfulness, but in grateful adoration, then for the first time would Bunkerville hold a missionary meeting.

Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME.

Brothers! is not the world's belief conditioned on our union? In that lies the deadliest sin of sectarianism.

For still, with all their triumphs, missions move so slowly! Nineteen centuries have passed since our Savior bade His disciples go into all the world and win all men to Him, and still we have only one soul in India to the idols' three hundred, only one soul in China to the idols' three thousand; still the mission boards are sorely lacking money and

men; still a score of heathen are born where one is born again.

I am writing to those who believe that Christ knows best, that when we go His way, and not till then, we achieve His success. And His way to the triumph of His Church has been clearly pointed out.

O Christ! that men may come to see this! that the fire of missionary zeal may fuse their hearts! that in humility and loving obedience men may turn from their own devices to Thine! that the world may believe in Thee, the whole rejoicing world, and that Thy followers, even in this day, may furnish the victorious argument,

That they all may be one!

XVIII

Church Union and Patriotism

THERE are ten churches in Somerton, and there are twenty saloons; the more churches, the more saloons; if there were fewer churches there would be fewer saloons, provided the fewer churches meant Church union.

For each of the ten churches contains twice and more than twice as many voters as each of the saloons; but the saloons are a unit, and the churches are ten.

The more patent evils that exist in the State, and many of the more sinuous evils, exist by virtue of a divided Church. "By virtue," did I say? By the vice of it!

But I hear the question: "How would Church union unite Christians against the saloon? We grant their numbers, and their power, if united, to drive the saloon from the land; but note the diverse and mutually hostile temperance organizations, each loudly asserting its own way of combating intemperance to be the only right way,

and denouncing the others as weak, inefficient, and hypocritical! Yet all are intensely in earnest against the united foe. Does not this inveterate confusion among temperance workers, this bigotry of many, this unwillingness to work together, prove the impossibility of Church union?"

No! It only exhibits on another stage the baneful spirit of sectarianism. The very pride of opinion that makes the sects, the confident exaltation of individual "conscience," the refusal to yield preferences and adopt another's mode, this that is thwarting the Church is thwarting reform. Temperance workers are constantly defeated because they are sectarian.

The same spirit of humility and love that would unite the sects would unite the temperance societies; the same readiness of cooperation, the same willingness to acknowledge wisdom in others, to adopt another's method, to prefer others to one's self.

Each temperance organization, indeed, is only an attempt at Church union, rendered negative by the absence of the spirit of Christian unity. Certain followers of the Lord said, "It would be grand to unite all Christians against the saloon *in our way*," and one organization sprung up. Other followers of the Lord said, "It would be grand to unite all

Christians against the saloon, *in our way,"* and a different organization sprung up. And so on. That *"in our way"* vitiates each, as it so largely vitiates the sects.

Each temperance organization, then, is an attempt at Church union along sectarian lines; when the true Church union comes, the temperance societies may disband, for the united Church will be the best temperance society. And it will be victorious.

Did no other reason urge Church unity, this would be motive sufficient, the certainty that, if Christians once learned to work together, they would destroy the saloon.

But this plea gains instant and powerful reinforcement from all other reforms. Lust is an evil as mighty as intemperance, and far more crafty. Against it also an earnest war is waged by groups of Christians here and there, by societies outside the churches, whereas the only power that can ever break through and burn in purifying fire the vast network of organized licentiousness is the power of an organically united Church.

The Christian Sabbath should need no defense save the arm of the Church; would need no other defense, were not that arm dissected into a dozen bleeding pieces. But here and there are groups

of Christians striving in societies outside the churches to do what Christ certainly wants His Church to do, preserve for man's uses the Sabbath made for man. Never will the Sabbath inroads of greed, of debauchery, and of flippancy be checked till the members of Christ's body are reunited, and take in their mighty hand once more the scourge of cords!

So is it with the maintenance of religion in our public schools, or at least their preservation from irreligion. Here and there parents are aroused to see that godly men and women shall form the characters of their children; but such efforts are few, feeble, and spasmodic. This should be the persistent concern of a united Church.

So is it with the war against war, waged by the peace societies outside the Churches, to the shame of the followers of the Prince of Peace. This settlement of disputes by preponderance of cannon rather than of reason and right, this organized and glorified brutality, this defiance and annulment of civilization, would shrink abashed before the indignation of a united Church.

The health of the body depends upon the harmonious action of all its parts. If the lungs refuse cooperation with the liver, the heart with the intestines, the brain with the foot, the body is clogged

with waste material, and is poisoned throughout. So with the elimination of waste from the body politic and the counteracting of its poisons. All the forces of health must combine, or there is no health.

The bane of Church disunion is seen in the social life of every village. Here is a community of three thousand souls. If it is to be sweet and pure, a beautiful sight to the eye, a safe place for the nurture of children, a good spot for business and a sound stepping-stone to heaven, only the determined association of all that are godly in the village can bring this about and uphold it through the years.

But here are Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Disciples. And the Methodists are a community by themselves. And the Presbyterians are a sufficing clique. And the Baptists are intimate only with the Baptists. And the Episcopalian circle is unbroken for outsiders. And the Disciples know none but Disciples. Not in pride, necessarily, still less in hostility, but through indifference and the force of circumstances.

For each church, with two services on Sunday, a mid-week prayer-meeting, business meetings and socials, the Sunday-school and young people's society

and other organizations, brings its members together at least two hundred times a year. What room is there for other associations? What chance is there for the formation of outside friendships? Week after week the Methodists see Methodist faces around them, hear Methodist voices, become familiar with one another, learn to love one another, join families by marriage. It is a little Methodist world, quite naturally and inevitably. Alongside it is a similar Presbyterian world, moving in another orbit, with another center of attraction. And a Baptist world. And an Episcopalian world. And a Disciple world.

It is otherwise with worldlings. At the dance-hall, the card-party, the theater, the saloon, in the alley, on the back streets, in the houses of ill fame, there are continual chances for meeting, for the extension of ties, for the multiplication of common interests. They of the slums know all about one another. They are a community. The churches are isolations.

And so you will find, over and over, the forces of degradation controlling a village. There is to be a vote on no-license; easily and exultantly they roll up their majority, while the church members look on in dismay. Selectmen are to be elected, a deacon, a minister, and a judge, against a saloon-owner, a gam-

bler, and a demagog. With a series of cheerful grins the last three take the oath of office.

Now and then, grown desperate, moved by some shameless waste of money or pandering to vice or outbreak of crime, the Christians get together and act as a unit for the purifying of the town. The gambling hells are abolished. The saloons are closed up. The prostitutes are driven out of town. Good men are placed in office.

But the saloon-keepers only wink at one another and whisper, "Wait." The gamblers only say, "It won't last." The prostitutes only say, "They'll get tired." And it all comes to pass.

Christ's followers, brought together by an emergency, are not held together constitutionally; rather, the fundamental organization of the churches tends ever to pull them apart. Only the permanent union of the churches will provide a permanent base of operations against the devil.

Here are the noble Municipal Reform Leagues, and other bandings together of Christian citizens for the purification of our cities. Every one of them is a standing protest against the inefficiency of the churches, a standing plea for a united Church. "The machine" is united. "The boys" pull together. "To

the victors belong the spoils" is a unifying slogan. Nothing can neutralize the elements of corruption but the elements of righteousness, by organic union brought to bear against them.

Yonder at Washington is a Reform Bureau that lives and works through the grit and grace of a single man, the only pretense of a permanent representation at our national capital of the Christian sentiment of our country.

We call this a Christian nation, but the term will never be justified until the Christianity of the nation is definitely and systematically and abidingly directed upon the national affairs. And that can never be until there is a United Church in these United States.

Let no one raise the bugbear of a State Church. What is needed is a Church *for* the State, not a Church *of* the State. If the liquor-sellers maintain a lobby at Washington, as they do, the consolidated Church of Christ should be effectively represented there. If Greed has a hand in the making of party platforms, should not Unselfishness also have a hand? If the churches may help individuals to a better life, why may not the Church help the nation to a better life? A State Church puts the seal of the State upon the Church; I would put the seal of the Church upon the State.

So long have Christians thought it impossible to divest religion of partisanship, that they believe it impossible for the Church to deal in politics without becoming partisan. Church union, by a compelling illustration, would discredit that objection also.

Sectarianism and political partisanship are birds of a feather. Your typical Republican believes no good of a Democrat, nor your typical Democrat of a Republican. "Turn the rascals out!" is the cry, whichever party is in the opposition. No credit is given of patriotism or of good intention. Principles are lost in personalities. "In honor preferring one another" is never the motto of party platforms. "Hopeth all things, believeth all things" must be reversed when applied to the mutual relations of political parties. A good measure, proposed by one party, is opposed by the other, lest their opponents get credit by it. Political partisanship is sectarian patriotism.

Church union would teach a truer patriotism, a patriotism that draws all good citizens together for the good of the city, that combines all true patriots for the welfare of the nation; a patriotism with convictions, and courage to back them, but also with humility and a sense of proportion, with the willingness to see wisdom in others and to yield in non-essentials; a Christian patriotism,

abasing self, preferring others, living for all. When this spirit gets into the sects it will spread from them into the parties. A united Church in danger of partisanship in bettering the State? It would be the death of partisanship.

The Church of the future will not leave it to sporadic groups of Christians or of non-Christians to conduct social and political reforms, thus exiling itself from one of man's deepest interests, and thrusting aside its own task and glory. It will train its own young in the high duties of citizenship, not leaving their civic education to chance, to secular newspapers and scheming politicians of low ideals. The Church of Christ in Bunkerville will be a civic club, united in seeking the best for Bunkerville, the best officers, the best laws, the best execution of the laws; united to gather information and spread it; united to nominate good men, elect them, and support them. The united Church of Christ in America will be an organization for practical patriotism, combining for Christly service the Christians of all parties; as eager to write a party platform such as Christ would approve, as to write a temperance pledge or a sermon; as eager to get in all parties the nominees that Christ would approve, as to get men into the prayer-meetings; as eager to fight Satan at the polls as in the parlor.

For the Church must be salt, and salt has no choice, but purifies whatever it touches. And it must be light, which makes no preference, but flashes impartially in all directions. And it must be leaven, which permeates all the measures, till the whole is leavened.

This is manly work, and to engage in it will make the Church manly. It is difficult work, and requires a united Church. It is unifying work, and draws all the churches together. No guerrilla bands, however numerous and determined, can win a great battle; but if our Captain takes these guerilla sects, fuses them into one by the heat of His ardor, and hurls them as a single crashing thunderbolt against the adversary, then in the joy of the battle, then in the comradeship of daring and enduring, then in the triumphs as they swiftly come, we shall know the wisdom of our Captain's will and the delight of His answered prayer,

That they all may be one.

XIX

The United Church of Christ

ONCE, for a few supreme days, I wandered among cathedrals. The visions of that time will never leave me, but evermore, when my spirit is at peace, a pillared strength surrounds me and lifts me, and far overhead floats the segmented ceiling, God's ideals, perfect yet incomplete, springing and growing, the solidity of stone, and the fluency of the sky!

Each cathedral dominated its town. Seen far over the plains, it spelled the town in a character of glory. Dwellings and shops and factories nestled beneath it. Mind and eyes were ever drawn toward its compelling summits. In slumber, at midnight, one felt it was there.

I knew that the cathedrals were poor places to speak in and hear in. I knew that they were cold and damp and draughty. I knew that the religion they housed was often formalism, and that often my Father dwelt more delightedly in some crude chapel of Dissent.

But the cathedrals! they were apart from their contents, and spoke a language all their own. They were of the fundamental religion, and not of sect, whether Established or Nonconformist. They needed not to apologize for the draughts and the formalism, as Angelo's Moses makes no apology for a spider-web.

And I think that the Church ideal of all devout souls is the cathedral ideal.

Religion is one. It is impossible to conceive two cathedrals in a town, for neither would be a cathedral. Though the Church of Christ in Philadelphia needs many meeting-places, the Church must be one, a cathedral.

Religion, thus one, is dominant. It accepts no second place. Not a forty-story building may rise above it, nor the highest factory chimney. And only a united Church can win this dominance; only a united Church can be a cathedral.

Religion is of God and not of man. Nothing is more striking in a cathedral than its anonymity. Great paintings, great sculptures, great poems, are associated with the names of their makers; but never great churches. Men have builded, many men, but "they builded

better than they knew"; and the world, as they wished, has accepted their work as God's and has forgotten them.

So will it be with the Church of Christ when the blocks cut from Calvin's quarry, and Luther's, and Wesley's, and Fox's, and Swedenborg's, and Channing's, and Campbell's, and the rest, come together in the one Cathedral. It will be anonymous of men; it will bear only the Name that is above every name.

Religion is cosmopolitan, universal. In gazing at a cathedral only a pedant thinks of its style, analyzes its architecture, this door of the twelfth century, yonder tower of the fourteenth, here a Norman arch, yonder a Doric pillar, and in the Lady chapel the influence of the Gothic. Beauty is one, harmony of form is one, of all ages and manners.

So will it be with the Church of Christ when the solvent of love has compounded our forms of worship, our methods of work, and infused through all our ways the rhythm of the cathedral.

Those that scout this as impractical have never mused upon the unity of art, nor come to realize how achievement in one sphere is promise and proof of achievement in all spheres, and least doubtfully where the spheres are so allied as architecture and religion.

In these chapters I have drawn the details of my cathedral, as the architect would set them forth on separate sheets. Let me try to combine them in a single picture.

And first, there shall be in every village, and in every considerable section of a city, its one church building. Not, as now, six spires all leaning apart, their clashing architecture symbolic of the lack of spiritual harmony, but one controlling lord of the landscape. Not, as now, six meager boxes, of board, or seldom brick, or still more seldom stone, but one temple of the One God, beautiful as His love, permanent as His power.

It will not be too grand to be homelike, nor too familiar to be inspiring. It will be the creation of a new architecture, lofty as the sky, tender as the clouds, intimate as the sunshine. It will lighten the young man's eye, and little children will love it. Its presence in the town will make sordidness ever more difficult and infidelity ever more monstrous. It will be the winsome and worthy embodiment of our religion.

It will be modern and practical as well as anciently beautiful and grand. Fresh air, and warmth, and light, easy hearing and comfortable seats, will there be handmaids of the Gospel. The great auditorium will be the center of many smaller rooms, each dedicated to a joyful duty.

It will be the House of God; it will be the village home.

Many ministers will serve therein, each of a different talent, each glad of the others' gifts, each willing to be last and least, a brotherhood before which all Christians must needs be brotherly.

Thither, in the unity of the Spirit, will come all that love the Lord or seek the way to Him. Whether they will still be called Methodists and Baptists and the like I do not know, and certainly I do not care, since over all names will be one, the United Church of Christ. They will not have broken with the inspiration of their great pasts, but each will have added to his own the memories and inspirations of the others.

With the love that seeketh not its own they will have built up a form of worship wherein all devoutness dwells; the Quaker will not find it too ornate nor the Episcopalian too bare. With man this is impossible, but not with God, when man worships Him in the one Spirit, the one Truth. It will be a remembrance of the one worship of the Temple. It will be an anticipation of the one ritual of heaven.

Already we are one in song. The hymn-books are a standing refutation of the sects.

Already we are one in the Psalter; our "responsive readings" are in unison.

Already we are one in the Bible. It has never been found necessary to publish a sectarian Bible!

Already we are one in prayer. Whoever truly prays has passed beyond the sects, has risen above the fences, defies the classifications of the theologians. Who can point out a Baptist prayer, or a Presbyterian?

We are all one in all the essentials of worship, save the spirit of love. When that comes we shall scorn the non-essentials.

This united Church of Christ in every village will be the home of all that is holy and strong.

Its vital organization, its heroic plan, will appeal to young men, where our sects so noticeably fail. They will join the army, when it becomes an army.

It will be a university of the Book, as every church should be, the one inspiring center of Bible teaching and Bible study, where Bible courses will be given to adequate audiences, and where the Bible lovers of the whole community will share their discoveries.

It will be a forum of theology, where seekers after God will help one another in the search; where Baptist will be eager to communicate the truth he knows, and eager to learn what truth the Methodist knows; where the pride of opinion will be swallowed up in the humility of a common ignorance, a common longing.

It will be an exchange of experience, an emporium of prayer, whither the strong will gather to serve the weak, and the trembling to be comforted, and the doubter to be assured.

It will be the civic conscience of the place, the reservoir of political health, the magazine of political energy.

As it will not live for itself, it will not even live solely for its town, but its lines will reach out through the nation and all the earth.

And in all this activity, missionary and civic, Biblical and devotional, pastoral and laical, they all will be one, Methodist Episcopal and Free Methodist, General Council Lutheran and Reformed Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ and Christian Connection, United Brethren and Friends and Moravians, Free Baptist and German Baptist, Congregationalist and Reformed Episcopalian, Baptist and Presbyterian, Reformed Church in the United States and Reformed Church in America, General Synod Lutherans

and Cumberland Presbyterians and United Presbyterians and Methodist Protestants, Methodists North and South, Presbyterians North and South—alas, for the interminable list!—but however the united Church of Christ in that place may be constituted, they all will be one.

They will be one in their determination to do the will of Christ; in their longing to be one, since that is His will.

They will be one in their eagerness to apply the precepts of Christ to bodies of believers, to theological cults, as well as to individual believers, in honor preferring one another there also, seeking there also to be last and not first, to bear one another's burdens, to hope all things and believe all things.

They will be one in their allegiance to conscience, in their respect for one another's consciences, in their recognition of non-essentials, and in their perception of the truth that whatever "conscience" parts true believers in Christ is not of Christ but of the devil.

They will be one in the search for God, in the passion to know Him, the truth about Him, the whole truth and all sides of it. And each will know that the whole truth is too large to be caught by a one-sided mind.

They will be one in their trust of truth, that it is mighty and will prevail; and in their trust of one another.

They will be one—sole secret of their peace and their power—one in the Holy Spirit of the living God, who will take of the things of Christ and show them to them, and will lead them into all truth; not one into one truth and another into another, but all into all truth.

And thus there will come to pass the united Church of Christ.

But I have pictured a local church? I have not outlined the wider possibilities or shown them to be possibilities? And how about the mission boards, and the publishing societies, and the Sunday-school secretaries, and the denominational colleges, and the conferences and councils and assemblies, and the funds, and the bequests, and—oh!—and the theological seminaries? How about these? Will not my air-castle fall to pieces when stretched beyond a village?

No! the *crux* of Church union is the village. If the spirit of it enters there, it will conquer everywhere else.

For the heart of the matter is there; the rest is but administrative details. Questions of law, as to funds; questions, perhaps, as they are learning in

Scotland, of the "dead hand," and of financial martyrdom for the sake of Christian brotherhood and present-day obedience to truth. Questions of nomenclature; and Christians will not long let a name defeat the reality. Questions of method; and where there is a will to do Christ's will, there is always a way.

The local church is the proof of it all, the model for it all. If the Sunday-schools of Bunkerville can form one Bible school, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran, a union Sunday-school board for those denominations is possible. Already the denominations are beginning to combine in issuing Sunday-school papers, greatly to their improvement. When did a controverted dogma even enter a Sunday-school paper? Already our Sunday-school libraries admit freely the books of all publishers.

After the local churches had held union missionary meetings for a year, union boards of missions would be not only possible but inevitable.

After the pastors of a village had come together in a union pastorate, the training of pastors in a union school of the prophets would seem the most natural thing in the world. Appoint, if you must, your professors of Calvinism, of Methodism, of Congregationalism; but there is no sect in Hebrew or Greek, in

hymnody or elocution, in the study of the practical, main work of a pastor.

I am not concerned, therefore, with the national and world-wide organization of Church union; I think that most discussions of the subject have come to naught because they begin there, where, after a while, but not now, we shall gloriously end.

We may trust the leaders of the denominations to crown the temple, if the local churches will lay the foundations. They are wise and experienced men, they are God-fearing and sincere men, they are men of devotion, and will not let self stand in the way of the Kingdom.

We must do our duty before they can do theirs. Each must build in his own heart the United Church of Christ, before there can be a United Church in the world. As we live, you and I, neighbors of differing opinion but the same Christ, we must unite, before there can rise in the earth the realization of our Savior's prayer,

That they all
may be
one.

XX

First Steps

THEREFORE it remains to ask how we may go to work upon this United Church of Christ—we, humble and unknown, with little influence and power, how we may acquit our consciences in this great matter, lay some stone, however small, upon the one Foundation, and become founders, however insignificant, of Christ's desire.

And first it must be by the recognition of this desire, and acceptance of it as our commission.

There are many other ways—alas! many—in which we are not doing His will. We shall come to them, but we shall not wait for them; we shall do, and now, this one thing that we know to be His will.

That commission, proudly and unreservedly accepted, will enlarge whoever receives it. In the strength of it, by the authority of it, you will dare to speak and write, to combat prejudices, face majorities, proclaim the Desire, and wait.

And, second, it must be by individual action. The will of Christ admits no tarrying for other men. Whoever reads it must run. You are not a church officer, but in the ranks. You are a church officer and not a pastor. You are a pastor, but of a humble church. You are over a large church, but you are not a denominational leader, a moderator, a secretary, an editor, a bishop. Well, what of it? Christ calls not bishops or elders, not pastors or laymen, but souls. "What is that to thee? Follow *thou* me."

Duty needs no partner, admits no partner. "*For them that believe on me through their word*"—so runs the prayer. You believe on Christ. Upon you, then, to the limit of your power, rests the responsibility "that they all may be one."

And, third, the beginning of Church union must be wherever, in each locality or in the wider field, we can begin. Here it will be with union Bible schools; yonder, with union prayer-meetings. In one place a union pastorate will be immediately possible. We are beginning to see union denominations. We can trust God's leading, if we will be led. We can trust God's continuing, if in the right spirit, and anywhere, we will begin.

So that, fourth, we must look to our own spirits. In the very nature of the case, Church union, the destruction of the pride of opinion, is ruined by pride of opinion in its promoters. It is possible to be a very bigot in denouncing bigotry. Some of the most "liberal" theologians are the narrowest of Christians. "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

The warfare against sectarianism may never succeed if it is conducted in a sectarian spirit. Two sects may even unite, but if they have only formed a larger sect, where is the gain? It is possible for two poisons so to come together as to make a healthful liquid, or a more virulent poison.

Consolidation of sects will never bring it about "that they all may be one." It is conceivable that there should be only two sects, and yet more of the sectarian spirit than now, each sect looking only on its own things, preferring itself to the other, seeking to be first rather than last. And it is conceivable, tho not likely, that we should have as many denominations as at present, yet not a single sect, since all the Christian bodies would be members one of another, each bearing the other's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." If we can get the fruits of Christian union, we shall not care about the shape of the tree-trunk, or the number of branches.

That is, if two churches meet together eagerly and happily for prayer to the one Father.

If two churches long for opportunities of discussing Christian truth together, of learning from each other's experiences, being strengthened by each other's faith and guided by each other's insight, and make those opportunities whenever they can.

If two churches study the one Book together, minister together to the poor, visit the prisoners together and the sick, train the young together, reach out together into the nation and the world.

If two churches bear each other's burdens, pay each other's debts, build up each other's membership, surprise each other with unexpected gifts.

If two churches praise each other, rejoice in each other's successes, strive in sincere and ardent love to promote the other to the leading place.

In fine, if two churches exhibit with reference to one another the same fruits of the Spirit that two Christian

brothers would exhibit, what care I, what should any one care, about the outward form? The Savior's prayer has been answered. They are one.

I think that two such churches will wish before long to become one outwardly, for the sake—if for nothing else—of the effect on the young, the unbeliever, the heathen. But I may be wrong.

I think they will wish to lay aside their devisive names and adopt one name; but I may be wrong. I would not be a bigot.

I think they will wish to devise common methods, that they may work together more effectively; but I may be wrong. I would have no pride of opinion.

I think they will wish to delve so deeply and persistently into the one truth, the whole truth, that they will see eye to eye, having one faith and baptism as they have one Lord; but I may be wrong. I would not be a sectarian.

I think that, as this spirit grows among the churches, the formation of the United Church of Christ—in Chicago, in America, in the world—will be inevitable; but I may be wrong. To insist on this, or on any similar detail, would be to fall into the very same error I am combating.

We may think as we please—rather, as we must—about these matters; but, brothers beloved, there are some things we must KNOW.

We must KNOW that our precious Redeemer, who is also our Judge, is praying, longing, commanding, that we all may be one.

We must KNOW that His will is our only joy, our only prosperity, our only safety.

We must KNOW that *now* is the only acceptable time for doing His will.

We must KNOW—each of us must say it for himself, "I, I, I am Christ's commissioner for Church union."

What I would do first, if I were a minister, would, I think, be this. I would bring together my brother ministers once a week. I would make a beginning, tho only one would come at first. We should meet on "Blue Monday," and make it Golden Monday. We should meet turnabout in one another's studies. We should tell one another what we had preached about the day before. We should relate our successes, and rejoice together. We should lay our perplexities before one another, and counsel together. Above all, and often amid it all, we should pray together.

And then I think, if I were a minister, I should go aside once a year with my brother ministers of the village, or of the city district, and we should spend several days apart with God.

And then I think I should go forth—all of us ministers would go forth—two by two, visiting strangers, summoning the heedless, comforting the sad, uplifting the fallen.

Those, I think, would be my first steps, if I were a minister. But, being a layman, my first step has been study.

"Know thyself"—well, we know that fairly well, we denominations; but how poorly we know one another!

Let us study doctrines; not to prove that what our Church believes is the only true system, but honestly to put ourselves in the place of other denominations, and faithfully to compare their reasons with our own.

Let us study missions; not to brag of our denominational superiority, but to learn what heroes all the churches have produced, what triumphs all the churches have won.

Let us study methods, forms of governments, diversities of administration, varieties of worship; not to convince ourselves and others that our way is best,

but to recognize the excellencies, perhaps the superiority, of other ways.

Let us organize conferences for the joint study of these subjects, for comparisons that are pleasing, for appreciations, for questions, for debate.

And then, as we begin to know one another, laymen, ministers, denominations, let us get as close together as our consciences will let us! Let us magnify the union work we have, and constantly add to it. Let us be bold to experiment with brotherhood—union meetings of all kinds, union committees, union sociables, union pastorates, union publishing enterprises, union missionary enterprises, union churches and denominations.

We shall make mistakes; ah, how many mistakes! We shall fail; ah, how many times and how discouragingly! But χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά (good things are hard). If the gem is readily polished you have no diamond. It is not all upward in climbing a mountain; sometimes the deepest ravine is just before the summit.

We shall have trials. We shall be misunderstood. We shall be maligned. The weapons of schism are sharp and poisoned. But so was He misunderstood and maligned, so was He

thrust through with venomed spears who prayed that they all might be one.

His will be done, on earth as in heaven! On earth, with its clashing judgments, as in heaven with its perfect accord. On earth, with its ignorance of brothers, as in heaven, where we know and are known. On earth, with its parted tabernacles, as in heaven, where God is the Temple. His will, which is peace and joy! His will, which is prosperity and power! His will, which is the climax, the glory, the perfection of His Church! His blessed will,

That they all may be one.

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